



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

*Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!*

Vol. 12, No. II, April 1975

“What value has this birth without Knowledge born of realization? It is not even worth speaking about, Oh Arunachala!”

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 46

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(A QUARTERLY)

“Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!”

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

Vol. 12

APRIL 1975

No. II

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

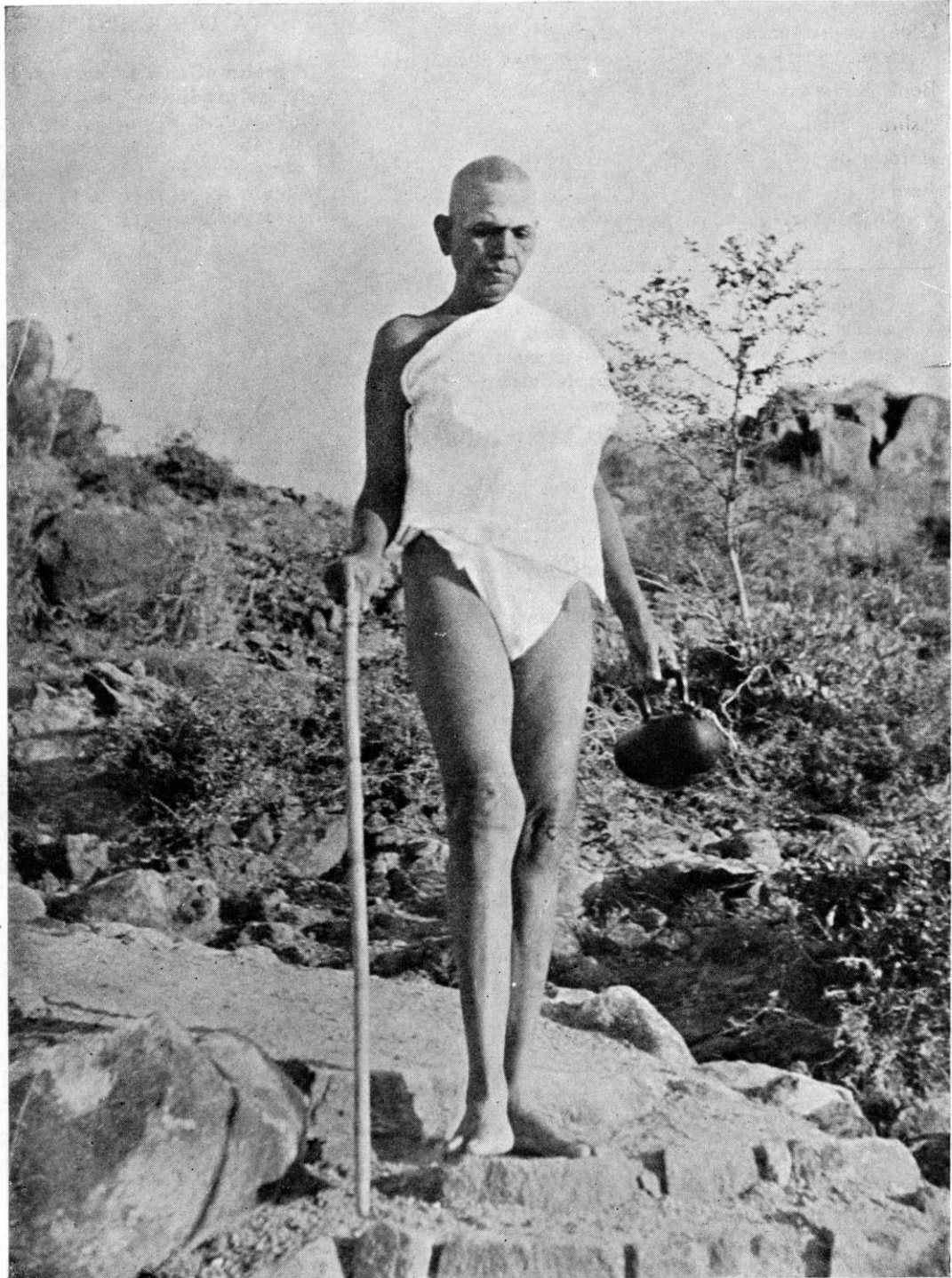
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



1901. The man standing on the hillside is a member of the tribe of the same name. He is holding a staff and a gourd. The hillside is rocky and the vegetation is sparse. The man is wearing a white tunic and shorts.

The Mountain Path

Vol. 12. No. II, April 1975

EDITORIAL

By Viswanatha Swami

Incessant Glow of Inner Awareness

IT is said in the *Puranas* that on the setting in of the *Kali Yuga* (Dark Age) people would talk and talk about Brahman but because of preoccupation with the life of the senses they would not try to understand, get in tune with and be That. Not only that, but most people, we see, are indifferent or even averse to spiritual truth and experience. Under these circumstances how can a person who has not in himself the indispensable initial virtues of aspiration, earnestness and self-control and could not concentrate his mind even on the repetition of any Name or *mantra* of God, comprehend ultimate Reality which is subtler than the subtlest? That is why, in the spiritual tradition of all religions, inner alertness, aspiration, self-control and concentration on some *mantra* of Name of God, prayer for Divine help and grace and the study of scriptures, are prescribed as the first steps in spiritual life.

The Vedic Rishis, themselves Seers of *mantras*, knew the power of *mantras* in moulding one's spiritual life. The very meaning of the term *mantra* is 'that which protects one who repeats it and meditates on it' — *mānvanam trāyate iti mantrah*. *Mantras* are not mere words or syllables; they are storehouses of Divine Power capable of spiritually transforming one who practises them. They are mystic sound-forms originating from the heart of a sage perfectly attuned to the Divine. Maharshi Vasishtha advises spiritual aspirants thus; "Hold on to some

mantra, flawless, powerful and bright, of any aspect of God. Then, even long-standing and binding tendencies of mind cannot obstruct your path if you dwell thus in the Supreme, with all your actions dedicated to Him". (*Rig Veda*, VII 32, 13).

It is categorically stated in the *Puranas* and confirmed by all sages and saints that in the *Kali Yuga* there is no other way to God except through His Name. The *Bhagavad Gita* also praises *Japa* as the best of the methods of worship (X, 25). And answering Daivarata's question whether repetition of *Mantras* would bring about the same result as the steady practice of pure non-objective enquiry, Bhagavan Ramana said: "Success attends the earnest seekers who incessantly and with steady mind repeat *mantras* or *Pranava*. By repetition of *mantras* or pure *Pranava* alone one's mind is withdrawn from sense-objects and becomes identical with one's own real Being". (*Ramana Gita*, Ch. III 10, 11).

Appaya Dikshita, a great devotee and scholar of South India, begins his treatise

¹ *Gayatri mantra* :

*Aum bhoorbhuvah suvah
Tat savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dheemahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt*

"Pure Awareness (witness of waking, dream and sleep states) that which pervades Earth, Sky and Sun. We meditate upon that (adorable) Supreme Light of the self-effulgent Sun, who illumines our understanding."

Gāyatri Rahasya with the statement that the *Gāyatri-mantra*¹ is the sole refuge of the followers of all paths, *Karma, Bhakti, Yoga* and *Jnana* and concludes : "As *Gāyatri* stands supreme among *mantras* as deliverer from the bondage of ignorance, one should meditate upon it with a heart free from attachments and continue to practise it even when assailed by formidable obstacles". And *Manu* says that the two things that enable one to maintain one's spiritual nature unsullied are the practice of *Gāyatri Japa* and spontaneous friendliness towards all. This explains why in Vedic tradition one is initiated into *Gāyatri* in very early boyhood. With one's understanding illumined by meditation on *Gāyatri* one feels one with all and that is the sure basis of universal Love.

To dedicate one's whole life to *tapas* is the ideal of human existence prominently set forth in all sacred lore. The term *tapas* means spiritual aspiration and effort. Nothing is achieved without concentrated effort. All discoveries of science are the result of such dedicated effort — though they belong to the realm of external nature, the phenomenal universe. Much more of intense *tapas*, along with absolute purity and sincerity, is required for the discovery of spiritual Truth, which every one has to achieve for himself, because it relates to one's own real nature. That is what the *Rishi* means when he says : "Our Lord, resplendent *Agni*, by his Awareness pervades all. May we regain our pristine glory in Him" (R. V. I — 70, 1).

Tapas is defined by *Manu* as the focusing of all one's faculties, and exalted above all other virtues, because it is their very core. *Tapas* makes the impossible possible. *Rishis* glowed with such *tapas* and their *mantras* are rays of that inner radiance. We find in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* *Bhrigu* being directed by his father *Varuna* to find out *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality) by *tapas*, saying that *tapas* itself is *Brahman*. We then see *Bhrigu* engaging himself in *tapas*, rising up from stage to stage discarding the physical, vital, mental and intellectual and ultimately reaching the non-dual awareness of *Brahmic Bliss*. This is the import of the *Rig Vedic mantra* : *yat s̄nōh*

s̄num ārubat : "When one rises up from stage to stage, one's course becomes clearer and clearer ; *Indra*, then showers his grace upon the devotee, illumines the Truth and directs him on" (R. V. I — 10, 2). And it is also stated that those who are so directed never swerve from the Divine Law — they spontaneously act in conformity with it, ever in tune with the universal (I — 69,4). The Supreme is all-knowing, wise and silent and so is the devotee by His Grace.

Here are three verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* giving us some details and practical hints on *tapas* :

1. Worship of God, the regenerate, one's Guru and the wise, cleanliness, rectitude, continence and non-injury — these constitute bodily *tapas*.
2. Speech free from excitement, truthful, kind and beneficent, *japa* and study of sacred lore — these are the features of vocal *tapas*.
3. Tranquillity, benevolence, silence, self-control and purity of character — these are the aspects of mental *tapas*. (Ch. XVIII — 14, 15, 16).

The sacred *Ramayana* begins with the word *tapas*. The first verse of the epic runs thus : "Vamiki, the *tapasvin* (one dedicated to *tapas*) asked the great sage *Narada*, the best of knowers of speech, ever intent upon *tapas* and *s̄wādhyāya* (study of the scriptures)". The question is about an ideal man endowed with all the virtues and qualities that make one and in the reply we find a brilliant character-sketch of *Sri Rama*. This reminds us of the description of *Ramana* by *Ganapati Muni*,² as a remarkable blend of deep peace and supreme power, marvellous detachment and plenitude, of grace, quiet wisdom and sweetness of disposition.

Bhagavan Ramana in his *Upadesa Sāra* (Essence of the Teaching) has traced the successive steps, from beginning to end, leading to the spontaneous glow of the Supreme Self, on the eradication of the sense of separate individuality known as the ego. This, he says,

² In his *Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana*, v. 40.

is the greatest *tapas*. In his life we find the Name, Arunachala, vibrant within him from his childhood leading him on to the uninterrupted glow of the Self Supreme. And he has referred to Arunachala as his Father in the note left by him before leaving home for Arunachala and has given us his immortal hymns in praise of Arunachala.³ We see that the devotional relationship of Father and Son leads one on to the experience of absolute identity. It is interesting to note the father and son relationship predominant in the Vedic hymns. (We saw in the last editorial Madhuchandas praying to Agni : "Like a father to his son, be easy of access to us and ever dwell with us for our well-being"). Vasishtha prays to Indra : "Lord, bless us with understanding as a father helping his sons and guide us on and lead us along this Path so that we may get enlightened here and now." (VII — 32, 36).

There is a very interesting term found in the Vedas to denote *Atma Nishta* (inherence in the Self), *dbiyambāh*, i.e., those who hold

their understanding steady or who are *sthitā prajñās* according to the *Bhagavad Gita*. It occurs in a *mantra* of Maharshi Parāśara on Agni : "Even the most intelligent of the devas, despite their efforts, did not recognize the child Agni playing about all of us, whereas those who held their understanding steady, proceeding by the marks of his feet with profound earnestness found themselves in the captivating abode of Agni." (I — 72,2). Agni is described as the Urge or Truth and the Effulgence of Truth (*ritasya presha, ritasya dheetib*) and that is the same as the term *Atma Sphurana* (Glow of the Self), the keyword found in Ramana's teaching.

"Whose form is Awareness Pure and whose very nature is to take into his fold the whole of creation, I bow to that Guru Ramana who is an unbroken succession of waves of bliss."⁴

³ Five Hymns to Arunachala.

⁴ Translation of a verse in *Sanskrit*.

If you can walk on water
You are no better than a straw.
If you can fly in the air
You are no better than a fly.
Conquer your heart,
Then you may be somebody.

— Sbeikh Ansari

Birds in the sky and fish in water
Dart and leave no track behind.
And none can trace the path by which
The sages journeyed to the Self.

— Sri Muruganar

ON THE STAGES OF LIFE¹

By

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

IN reply to a question of Karshni, Bhagavan explained the duties connected with the four *asbramas* (stages of life).

Whether one is a bachelor or house-holder, a forest-dweller or a *sannyasin*, or a woman or a *shudra*, whoever is ripe and fit, may enquire about Brahman.

The order of the *asbramas* serves, like a flight of steps, to attain the Supreme. For one of a very mature mind this order does not apply.

This order has been prescribed so that the affairs of the world may go on smoothly. The duties of the first three *asbramas* are not opposed to *jnana*.

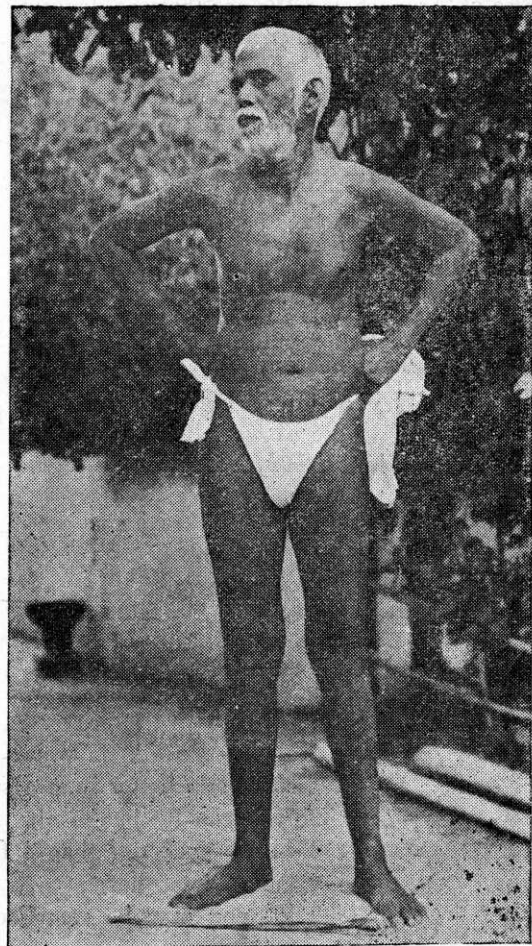
Sannyasa is pure *jnana*, not the ochre robe or a shaven head. However, this *asbrama* is meant to ward off various hindrances in one's path.

One whose energy is well developed through discipline, learning and growth in Knowledge in the *brahmacharya* stage itself, shines forth all the more in later life.

By purity of *brahmacharya* one attains purity in the house-holder's stage. The house-holder's *asbrama* is for the benefit of all.

Even for the house-holder, if he be completely non-attached, the Supreme Light shines forth without any doubt.

The learned prescribe the third *asbrama* for tapas. In this *asbrama* one may be with or without one's wife.



To the yogi of mature mind whose sins have been burnt away by tapas the fourth *asbrama* comes of its own accord in due time.

This teaching was given by Bhagavan on the 12th of August 1917.

¹ *Sri Ramana Gita*, Ch. VIII (Fifth Edition, 1973).

Renunciation and Yoga¹

By
Swami Ramdas

THE last chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* is a compendium or a brief masterly summary of all that is told in the foregoing chapters. In fact, it brings the whole teaching to its culmination, settling once for all, in clear and decisive language, the many problems dealt with so far in a more or less straggling and disjointed manner.

At the outset, Arjuna raises the most vital question on the solution of which depends the entire attitude of a human being towards life and action. The question is: wherein lies the difference between *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*?, Sri Krishna replies: *sannyāsa* or renunciation means abandoning such works as are tainted with the desire for the fruit and the performance of work only as self-discipline and *tapas*. *Tyāga* denotes the giving up of the desire for the reward of all kinds of action. While in the former, particular kinds of karma are entirely renounced, in the latter all karmas are performed without desire for the fruit. It is held action itself is an evil and it should be abandoned and it is also emphasised that works of sacrifice, gift and penance should never be relinquished. These are the conflicting opinions and injunctions of some or other men of great understanding.

Now the Lord declares His own decisive opinion. With all the force of His authority He says that works of sacrifice, gift and penance should be performed, because for the soul in his march towards the goal of liberation, these works purify the mind. But these actions must, of course, be done without attachment and without expecting any reward. These prescribed works must not be given up, and if any one does so, he is clearly deluded.

When a *sadhaka* out of fear of bodily pain gives up action which tends to his elevation



Swami Ramdas

and spiritual progress, he does not receive any benefit from such abandonment. Here it is clearly evident that in *nishkama* service and sacrifice the aspirant should be prepared to suffer physically if he desires to progress towards the Truth. All acts of self-discipline and self-sacrifice have to be done without question, forsaking attachment and desire for the result. A *sadhana* performed according to set rules and regulations, and carried on with perseverance is essential for self-purification. When perfect purity is attained, the non-attached *sadhaka* has neither aversion to painful action, nor attraction for the pleasant action. Since his attachment both for action and its fruit has ceased, he will undertake any action, desirable or undesirable, for the welfare of all beings and creatures.

The gist of the above verses is that renunciation of action is not the way to liberation, but what is essentially needed is renunciation of the fruit of action. So long as a soul is living in the body he cannot totally abandon action. The very fact of his having

¹ Adapted from *Gita Sandesh*. By Swami Ramdas (Anandashram, via Kanhangad, Kerala State).

assumed the physical garb urges him on to activity. It is immaterial in what kind of action the body is engaged, but what is required is a complete detachment of the soul's association with the action and the result. For him the dual aspect of karma, good and evil, does not exist. In fact, karma is looked upon by one who is obsessed by *moha* as good, evil or a mixture of the two. These distinctions have significance only for the ignorant, and not for the liberated who has destroyed *moha* by a surrender of all his actions to the supreme Lord.

The Lord now explains that there are five causes or vehicles through which the embodied soul performs actions. The body, the ego, subtle and gross organs, different kinds of inherent powers and fate which controls the forces within and without. For every action of man, done by his body, speech and mind, right or wrong, takes place owing to these five causes.

The ignorance of the soul lies in his thinking that he, as the individual self apart from the world-existence, is the doer. Due to a distorted vision, born of an undisciplined intellect, he fails to understand that God is the sole Doer. Therefore, in the field of action, the ego-sense is the sole cause for the bondage of karma. He who is free from egoism and has attained this supreme knowledge of the ever unaffected Atman may perform any action, however apparently terrible, and remain unfettered by its reaction; he may even do the work of slaughter, which is considered to be the most heinous action, without being affected by it.

For every action there comes a prompting from within, and this impulse springs from three causes, namely, knowledge, the knowable and the knower. And, again, three things bring about the accomplishment of an action, which are: the organ of action, action and the doer of action.

Knowledge, work and the doer, being the basis of action, actuate people differently according to the difference of the *gunas*. The *sattwic* knowledge is that knowledge by which a man disciplines his mind to behold one

imperishable Truth in all beings, the one supreme unity in all varied diversity—in all the multiple manifestations. That knowledge which looks upon all the varied lives as having separate existence, i.e., that they are animated and actuated by their own individual powers, is to be understood as of the *rajasic* or passionate nature. But the knowledge which considers that each and every object and being is existing by itself and is complete and perfect by itself, which proposition is not supported by reason or experience, is of *tamō guna*. Here the underlying unity of all existences is entirely ignored and the vision is circumscribed and is highly egoistic.

Next follows the nature of action according to the three *gunas*. The action of *sattwa guna* is according to the dictates of the sastras, free from the desire for reward, without attachment and unaffected by likes and dislikes. The action that is performed, induced by desire or through the impulse of egoism, or with great endeavour, is held to be of *rajasic* quality. Then, again, the action done in thoughtless folly, ignoring the necessary fitness for it and having no thought for its baneful results like loss and pain to others, belongs to the *tamasic* nature.

Among the doers of action there are also three kinds. He is the pure or *sattwic* doer who acts without *moha* (delusion), free from egoism, with a firm and unshakable will and remains unaffected either by victory or defeat. The doer who is urged on to action by the force of desire, bent upon obtaining its reward and so selfish, pain-inflicting, unholy and susceptible to the touches of joy and grief is said to possess the *rājasic* nature. Again, he is under the sway of *tamō guna* who has a nature which is quarrelsome, low, obstinate, deceiving, revengeful, lazy, hopeless and irregular.

Buddhi or the reasoning faculty and the steadiness of the will are also divided into three classes in relation to the three *gunas*. That understanding which perceives a clear distinction between the use of power and the non-use of it, what is rightly to be done and what should be avoided, fear and fearlessness

and bondage and freedom is *sāttwic buddhi*. The *buddhi* which is filled with *rajo guna* does not possess the power of discrimination between dharma and adharma and between what should be done and what should not be done. The *tamasic* understanding is so enveloped with the darkness of ignorance that it takes adharma to be dharma and perceives all things in a distorted and topsyturvy manner.

That steadiness of the will which swerves not from and is fixed in yoga by which one controls the restless mind and regulates the life-breaths and the senses is of the pure *sattwic* quality. That firmness of the will by which one ruled by infatuation and, hankering for the fruit, clings to dharma and performs actions for obtaining riches and other worldly objects is considered to be *rājasic*. Again, that firmness of the will on account of which one becomes foolish, is addicted to sleep and disturbed by fear, sorrow and dejection and is also filled with pride is of *tamō guna*.

Now the Lord describes the three kinds of happiness for which all creatures are striving. That experience which is felt at first as bitter as poison but at the end turns out to be sweet as nectar — an experience of pure bliss born of the knowledge of the Atman — is of the nature of *sattwa guna*. The joy resulting from the contact of the senses with their objects, felt at the outset as sweet as nectar but proving ultimately like poison, is declared *rajasic*. Whilst that joy which is from the first to last the outcome of utter ignorance of the Self and is derived from sleep, torpor and carelessness is called *tamasic*.

Sri Krishna has thus taught that the highest *guna* is *sattwa guna* and by the steady preponderance of it over the lower *gunas* the aspirant fits himself for the vision of God. When such vision is attained, the aspirant is lifted above all *gunas* and reaches a perfect state of liberation and immortal bliss. The pure or *śuddha sattwa* bears all the attributes of the ultimate vision aspired for. *Śuddha sattwa* stands for an awakened and illumined intelligence — so illumined by the very light of the Atman granting the aspirant a foretaste

of the equality, bliss, purity and freedom of the supreme Atman. Here the state attained cannot be held to be a permanent state, as by nature the *gunas* are subject to changes. The equal vision and immortal peace become fixed, sustained and eternal only by completely transcending the *gunas* through absolute absorption in oneness with God.

The *gunas* so bind the soul to the wheel of Karma that transcending them is a most difficult and rare achievement.

It is better for a man to adjust his life and action according to his *swabhāva* than undertake and discharge, however efficiently, the work which belongs to the nature of another. In short, the karma performed according to one's own *swabhāva* (stage of development) whatever that karma be, leads one to perfection. Therefore the Lord warns Arjuna that the karma determined by *swabhāva* should not be given up although it might appear as improper. All egoistic work is tainted as fire by smoke. But he whose mind is unattached to anything and who has controlled the mind and killed all desires, through internal renunciation of the egoistic impulse of action, becomes free from the touch or reaction of karma.

Once again, the Lord describes the highest status of divine knowledge, which a soul attains through the purity and light gained by following the path of self-surrender in all actions. The process of the *sadhana* for reaching this exalted state is reiterated.

The needed acquirements are : an awakened intellect, purity of thought, a firm control of mind, imperviousness to external influences and to the attraction of the sense-objects and absence of lust and malice.

In order to attain perfect union with the God-head through the practice of meditation the yogi resorts to solitude, and restrains the outgoing energy through control of speech, body and mind, and thus reaches a state of complete non-attachment. Further, giving up egoism, violence, pride, desire, anger and greed, he becomes free from the individual sense and enjoys the peace and bliss of the

eternal Truth. Now having realized the Eternal, satisfied in the peace of the Atman, he has neither grief nor desire left and gains supreme devotion to the Lord. Through such devotion he understands the Lord in His true being. Thus knowing Him in His real Being, the devotee is merged into the all-comprehensive Being of God. The devotee now does all work by taking entire refuge in the Lord and, by His grace, attains the loftiest status of dwelling in the imperishable and eternal Reality.

Therefore, the imperative command of Sri Krishna is to renounce attachment to all karmas by a total dedication of them to the Lord, to aspire for Him alone, to keep the light of discrimination ever burning in his *buddhi* and to have the mind ceaselessly contemplating on Him. All hindrances will be overcome by the Grace of the Lord through continuous remembrance of Him.

The case of Arjuna is typical. Out of sheer despair caused by delusion he rejects action which he has to perform in accordance with his *swabhava*. Such renunciation of action is the result of the impulse from the ego. Therefore, the Lord says to Arjuna: "Arjuna, you determine not to engage in the fight because you are under the sway of egoism but your resolution is of no avail. My divine *Prakriti*, which is the irresistible motive power which brings about all activities in the universe, will force you to action, i.e., the nature of the warrior in you will rise up and drive you to fight".

The embodied soul being an instrument in the hands of Prakriti must be doing some work or other according to his individual nature. Man, a tool in the hands of Prakriti, works whether he wills or not by the urgings of his nature. The Lord, residing in the hearts of all creatures, causes His whole universal Lila to move by His supreme will, just as the potter turns the pot on his wheel. He exhorts: "Knowing this great secret, O

Bharata, run to the Lord and take complete refuge in Him. If you do this, by His grace you will attain the immortal status of perfect peace and bliss." The height of achievement lies in utter self-surrender to the supreme Lord of the universe. This is the grand finale to the entire teaching of the *Gita*.

As the first step, the aspirant through remembrance, devotion, meditation and *nishkama karma* attains the knowledge of the Atman — the immutable, immortal, nameless and formless aspect of God, thereby rising beyond the body-consciousness, *gunas* and *dwandwās* (pairs of opposites). At this stage comes the higher devotion by which the aspirant beholds the entire universal manifestation or Prakriti as the veritable expression or form of God Himself. Now he beholds in all changes, movements and actions of the universe the one divine power emanating from the Lord at work. In this exalted devotion, not only does the soul realize his perfect identity with God, but also enjoys the bliss of eternal union with the Lord in all the activities of life. To reach this highest and most blessed summit of God-realisation, the Lord with words filled with His infinite grace exhorts: "Through utter devotion and ceaseless remembrance dissolve thy mind in Me, love Me alone beyond all things. Dedicate entirely thy whole life and its activities to Me. In all manner of ways surrender thyself to Me. If thou doest this thou shalt certainly attain me. I assure thee; thou art extremely dear to Me."

"Giving up all dogmas, doctrines, creeds, cults created by the mind and all ideas relating to the rules and regulations of actions determined by the *gunas*, take complete refuge in Me alone and I shall liberate thee from all bondage. I will make thee perfectly sinless and pure, and grant thee the immortal status of eternal bliss and peace."

These words of Sri Krishna ring out the soothing music of His world-saving message.

THE TWO MASKS

By

Lama Anagarika Govinda

He had a dream.
You ask who?
What does it matter!?
S o m e b o d y — —
Perhaps you yourself
Dreamt once this dream.

He stood on the summit
Of a sacred hill,
Which was crowned by a temple.
Looking down into the plains,
He saw people moving up the hill
In a long, winding procession.
They were clad in flowing robes
And wore strange masks.

Reaching the summit,
They bowed down before the sanctuary,
And, having worshipped in silence,
They moved away towards the other side.

It was then only that he saw
That they wore two masks,
So that it appeared
As if they went backwards,
With the face towards the sanctuary.

The air was saturated with incense
And he entered the temple.
After having traversed three courtyards —

The Courtyard of Devotion,
In the centre of which
Burned the holy flame ;
The Courtyard of Right Conduct,
Which contained the Tablets of the Law ;
And the Courtyard of Meditation,
In which the Fountain of Clear Knowledge
Quenched the seekers' thirst —

He reached at last the Holy of Holies :
And suddenly he found himself
Between the images of two deities.

Unable to bow to one of them
Without turning his back upon the other,
Nor knowing whom to worship first,
He retreated in confusion.

While he retraced his steps,
A priest approached him,
Bringing him two masks
And asking him to put them on.

He did as he was told.
And when again he entered
The Holy of Holies
was empty!

In a bamboo forest the bamboos move in the wind, rub against one another and produce fire, which burns down the parent trees. So also knowledge born of maya burns maya to ashes.

— *Advaita Bodha Deepika.*

NON-ACTION

(A DIALOGUE)

By
Murdoch Kirby

She : Can you explain what the *Tao-Te-Ching* means when it says : "The sage relies on actionless activity",¹ and "with non-action there is nothing that is not done"?² Does "action that is actionless"³ mean anything? How can anything happen without action? "Some people speak of being lost in contemplation in the mountain forests, describing this as non-action".⁴ "Hearing of non-action some people think that lying down is better than walking".⁵ Is it meant that we should do nothing?

He : I think a good way to get an idea of what is meant is to look at what these early writers considered was behind non-action. It was believed that the basic nature of man was a pure simplicity. If a man could live his life simply, without contriving to make more of it than came naturally to him, then he would be living in the way intended for him : he would be following his *Tao*. What he accomplished would be determined by what attributes and power he possessed. In this view action in accordance with his nature is non-action ; anything outside or beyond it is action.

She : But doesn't living always involve action?

He : Of course. It is quite natural to do what has to be done. "The feet can walk, let them walk. The hands can hold, let them hold. Hear what is heard by your ears ; see what is seen by your eyes. Let your knowledge stop at what it does not know ; let your ability stop at what you cannot do. Use what is naturally useful, do what you can spontaneously do. Act according to your will within the limit of your nature, but have nothing to do with what is beyond it. This is the most easy way of non-action".⁶

She : Is it really better, then, not to try to learn more, and not to try to do more?

He : Kuo Hsiang's answer to that was : "By knowledge we mean the activity that attempts what is beyond one's natural ability : that which does not so is not called knowledge. One should act within the sphere of one's natural ability and attempt nothing that is beyond".⁷

What the *Tao-Te-Ching* says is : "He who pursues learning will increase his knowledge every day. He who pursues *Tao* will use his knowledge less every day. He uses less and less until he comes to non-action. With non-action there is nothing that is not done".⁸

She : I think I begin to see a light. What the *Tao-Te-Ching* is talking about is the spiritual life, for which great knowledge is not required. But it isn't wrong to use our brains to earn our living, is it?

He : I think we should be careful about making a distinction between what is required for our material needs and what is required for the spiritual life. Some of the things we do are just for our physical needs, but everything we do is of significance to our spirit. We can't just periodically opt out of our spiritual life. "The Way is that which no

¹ *Tao-Te-Ching*, 2.

² *Ibid.*, 48.

³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴ Kuo Hsiang (300 A.D.). Commentary on Chuang Tzu (300 B.C.). Quoted in *Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* by Fung Yu-Lan, p. 135.

⁵ Kuo Hsiang. Quoted in *Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, by Fung Yu-Lan, p. 225.

⁶ Kuo Hsiang. Quoted in *Chuang Tzu*, by Fung Yu-Lan, p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸ *Tao-Te-Ching*, 43.

man can do without. What a man can do without is not the Way".⁹

She : So everything we do matters. Suppose I could be of service to someone by going out of my way to help. Would that be action or non-action ?

He : If it was your spontaneous reaction then it would be non-action. If it is for some other reason, the hope of future benefit perhaps, then it is action. This idea of deliberate benevolence is made clear in the saying : "When the *Tao* is lost, there is the *Te*. When the *Te* is lost, there is human-heartedness. When human-heartedness is lost, there is righteousness. When righteousness is lost there are the rituals. Rituals are the degeneration of loyalty and good faith, and are the beginning of disorder in the world".¹⁰

She : If, though, we are only going to do what is spontaneous and natural to us, it

seems to me to be rather an unspiritual outlook on life.

He : It depends on what you understand by 'spiritual'. Neither the Taoists nor the Confucianists in China looked to an existence beyond this world. They looked within for the spirit. "What Heaven confers is called the nature. The following of the nature is called the *Tao*. The cultivation of this *Tao* is called spiritual culture".¹¹ That was a Confucian view. The Taoist looked to the pure simplicity of his inmost nature, and acted only in accordance with that. Doing that was, for him, non-action. "When you are in accordance with the principle of non-action your life cannot but be perfect. Life in perfection is nothing but happiness. Happiness is the perfection of life and needs nothing external".¹²

⁹ *Doctrine of the Mean* (Chung Yung), ch. 2.

¹⁰ *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 22 and *Tao-Te-Ching*, 38.

¹¹ *Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 2.

¹² Kuo Hsiang. Quoted in *Chuang Tzu*, by Fung Yu-Lan, p. 11.

"Every being in the world yearns to be always happy and free from the taint of sorrow, and desires to get rid of bodily ailments, etc., which are not of its true nature. Further, everyone cherishes the greatest love for himself, and this love is not possible in the absence of happiness. In deep sleep, though devoid of everything, one has the experience of being happy. Yet, due to the ignorance of the real nature of one's own being, which is happiness itself, people flounder in the vast ocean of material existence, forsaking the right path that leads to happiness, and act under the mistaken belief that the way to be happy consists in obtaining the pleasures of this world and the other."

— From his Introduction to *Vivekachudamani*
by Sri Bhagavan

The Muslim Path to Realisation

A few Introductory Notes

By
Ronald Rose

“ *But Allah is alone the Knower* ”

THE Muslim Path comprises four stages :
Sbarīat, Tarīkat, Hakīkat and Marīfat.

The first stage *Sbarīat* requires observance of the *Sbarīa*, a compendium of law derived from the Koran and authentic traditions which record the personal practices of the Prophet in daily life. Its aim is to subject the body to the Divine Will. The majority of Muslims find their peace (*Islām*) in a simple observance of *Sbarīa* and do not go beyond it.

What is called *Tasawwuf* or Sufism includes the next two stages. It may most simply be defined as the ‘interiorisation’ of the faith of believer and its preparation for the gnostic vision.

Tarīkat requires initiation into a *Tarīka*, a religious order, by an authorised Sheikh or Murshed (corresponding to a Hindu Guru), who instructs the pupil in the various secret prayers and yogic practices the order prescribes. *Zikr* (Hindu *Japa*), the constant remembrance of God by the repetition of one of the Divine Names, plays a very important role on this stage of the Path. There are ninety-nine Names of God and their corresponding attributes mentioned in the Koran. The Names (*Ilm*) are particularisations of the Divine Essence (*adh Dhat*). The attributes (*Sifat*) are their reflection in the phenomenal world.

Membership of a Muslim order does not necessitate renunciation of the world and family life. Marriage is incumbent on all Muslims when circumstances permit it and the law forbids a muslim to beg unless he has been without food for three days. Many Sufis maintain themselves by adopting some humble craft or trade. The Sheikh may how-

ever relieve the pupil of these obligations for some specific purpose. For instance, he may order him to make a long pilgrimage without money in order to increase his trust in God and His Mercy.

On the way of *Tarīka* the Muslim must continue to practise the ritual, prayers etc., of the *Sharia* as he is still identified with the body-consciousness. (At a similar stage the Hindu student of Advaita continues to observe the ordinary duties of his religion).

It follows from this that Sufism is a specifically Muslim Path and, as Arthur Osborne pointed out in an early issue of *The Mountain Path*, divorced from its Islamic context the word becomes meaningless. In the west today there are Sufi movements whose members disclaim they are Muslims. These rather eclectic movements may be very excellent, but why call themselves Sufi?

Sufism derives directly from certain verses in the Koran and from the *Hadiz Qudsi*, inspired utterances of the Prophet which are held to have an equal authority with the Koran. It may later have made use of Neo-Platonism and Jewish esotericism to develop its cosmological system, but this only means that, being itself an authentic tradition, it is in accord with other valid traditions. Similarly, at a later period, its gnostic aspects found encouragement by contact with Hindu Advaita.

Concerning the third stage, the *Ahl al Hakika* are those mystics who have understood the true nature of God. All concepts have been shattered. The great gnostic, Ibn Arabi, has pointed out that the ordinary believer with his conceptualised ideas of God is inadvertently worshipping, not God, but his own Ego.

A famous Sufi saying declares that every thought that comes into the mind of man is transitory "and Allah is not that".

As for the final stage *Marīfat* we will not presume to say anything. The seeker is "Gone Beyond". There is no longer a seeker.

Islam teaches that man (as Ego) has only a contingent existence.

This is made explicit in a number of famous Koranic passages :

"Everything goes to destruction (*bālika*) except His Face (*Wadjb*)" — XXVIII-88. Inter alia.

Whoever is upon the earth is fleeting (*fāni*) and the Face of the Lord abides."

"Allah's are the East and the West, wherever you turn there is the Face of Allah." 11.115.

The word Face (*wadjb*) is equated with the non-dual essence (*dbat*) and man has an irresistible attraction towards it, like the moth to the flame of the candle. So men act out of desire for the Face of Allah (*Koran* 11.278) and they "make for" the Face of Allah (VI. 52 int. al.).

So there is no concept of eternal or everlasting individual soul in Islam. The *Koran* says simply : "From Allah you come and to Allah you return". An adequate account of the complex cosmological system which maps man's exodus from, and return to, Allah is beyond this writer's powers and fortunately beyond the scope of a simple introductory article.

The non-dual Essence (*Allah, adb dbat*) manifests first as "the One" (*Abad*), then as the "One in multiplicity" (*Wāhid*). The process of manifestation and creation is much the same as in Platonism. At each stage it becomes increasingly veiled from the Divine Light (*Nur*) and descends further into darkness and "materiality".

Man however is created in God's image. He is a microcosm of the macrocosm, endowed not only with the Divine Attributes but with the *Rub* (Spirit) of Allah, although in his

natural, carnal state these remain almost inoperative.

The process of return to Allah consists in a gradual unveiling of the veiler. Through conformity to the *Shariat* man is led to the *Tarika*. The darkness slowly dispels. He reflects with ever increasing clarity the Divine Attributes and consequently, conforms at each stage more closely to the Divine Will until finally he and Allah are one and nought remains but Allah.

What is the purpose of it all — this "Divine Lila", as Hindus call it? Metaphysically any idea of purpose in the Divine Mind is, I suppose, absurd. Purpose can only refer to the temporal order. (We do some thing "now" in order to obtain some "future" objective). The *Koran* says simply that it is by the command (*amr*) of God.

An inspired utterance of the Prophet says : "I was a hidden treasure and I wished to reveal Myself (to Myself)". Concerning this, Ibn Arabi has some illuminating remarks : "Man unites in himself with the form of God and the form of the universe. He alone manifests the Divine Essence together with all its names and attributes. He is the mirror by which God is revealed to Himself and therefore the final cause of creation. We ourselves are the attributes by which we describe God ; our existence is merely an objectification of this existence — while God is necessary to us in order that we may exist, we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself."

Al Iskandari, a famous Sufi, says : "Behold what demonstrates the omnipotence of the Creator, exalted be He ! That He hides Himself from Himself by that which has no existence apart from Himself."

A number of God's Names (*ilm*) suggest a certain necessity. As *Khalik* (Creator) He must be continually creating. Mediaeval commentators of the *Koran* were already aware that in addition to our universe there are thousands of other universes and thousands of universes have preceded them. Allah is, incidentally, also the Destroyer.

Islam is blessed with a very simple creed consisting of two affirmatives both of which

are open to a number of levels of meaning. (Arabic is an extremely complex language and consequently admirably suited to be the vehicle of a religious tradition. A comprehensive commentary on the first 7 verses of the *Koran*, the *Surat al Fātīha*, may well run to 300 pages).

In the first the believer affirms :

"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah".

Literally understood, this implies a rather crude monotheism. Allah is the true God and all other gods are false. One can understand why Islam has always been, on the one hand, a very activist and aggressive religion and on the other strangely fatalistic and passive. *Insha Allah*, "If God wills it", is on every pious Muslim's lips with every proposition he utters.

At the opposite extreme Sufis interpret this affirmation in a purely advaitic sense. There is no Reality, if this is not the Reality. God is the sole Existent. All but He is just a magic lantern show reflected in the mirror of nothingness.

The second affirmation declares :

"I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah." This again is usually interpreted literally as referring to the historical Prophet. (It should, however, be noted

that Islam teaches there were many thousands of Prophets before Muhammad, and many Indian Muslims readily recognise Rama and Krishna as having been prophets).

Sufis who adopt the doctrine of Emanation identify Muhammad, the Perfect Man, (*Insān al Kāmil*) with the Logos, Universal Reason — the creative principle.

So, in the two affirmations we can find Shiva and Shakti.

Sufism, like Mahayana Buddhism, flies on the two wings of Love (*Muhabbat*) and Gnosis (*Marifat*). The one without the other remains inoperative and the whole purpose of *Zikr* (remembrance of the Divine Name) is to bring about a marriage between the mind and the heart or to bring the mind down into the heart.

Islam, even in its exoteric aspects is haunted by two words : *Tawwakul*, absolute trust in God and His Mercy, and *Tawhid*, the Divine Oneness.

In the former the believer gradually comes to realise that God is the sole "Doer". In the latter he comes to understand that God alone IS.

"All this is Brahman".

"Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of Allah".

A number of pharisees and men of Herod's party were sent to trap him (Jesus) with a question. They came and said : 'Master, you are an honest man, we know and truckle to no man, whoever he may be ; you teach in all honesty the way of life that God requires. Are we or we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor ? Shall we pay or not ?' Jesus saw how crafty their question was, and said, "Why are you trying to catch me out ? Fetch me a silver piece, and let me look at it." They brought one, and he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose inscription ?' 'Caesar's', they replied. Then Jesus said, 'Pay Caesar what is due to Caesar ; and pay God what is due to God.' And they heard him with astonishment.

— *St. Mark* (13-17)

The Alleviation of Suffering

By

Prof. R. Sadasiva Aiyar

LET us consider what is universally regarded as the very zenith of all moral excellence — the dedication of one's life to the alleviation of the suffering, in all its forms, of our fellow-creatures, by striving to mitigate either singly or through co-operative effort — aided perhaps by a genuine Welfare State — poverty and destitution; succouring those in calamity and distress. Only the noblest on earth are goaded on by this urge divine. Selfless, as distinguished from unselfish, service rendered to living beings is a sure way to our final Goal; and service is at its highest if surrendered to God, regarding all beings as expressions of the same Divine Energy.

The golden pages of human benevolence are illuminated by the names of many ministering angels, like *Abu Ben Adbem* in Leigh Hunt's poem. How we bow down in humility and reverence when we lose ourselves in their lives!

Who does not know the thrilling saga of Florence Nightingale. In her seventeenth year, as she tells us herself in her diary, she heard the voice of God, even as Joan of Arc had heard it: "On February 7, 1837, God spoke to me and called me to His service". It was, as Cecil Woodham-Smith, her biographer, tells us, "an objective voice, a voice outside herself speaking to her in human words".¹ Five years passed when her voice took shape as her life's destiny — to minister to the miserable of the world. In the summer of 1842 she records in a private note: "My mind is absorbed with the idea of the sufferings of men, it besets me behind and before". She wrestled with the lure of conjugal happiness and of shining in society, endowed as she was with brilliant and versatile talents. She renounced them all, overcame the dogged opposition of her parents, and for many years

tended the disease-stricken and starving shiploads of soldiers who filled the hospital at Scutari which she had created in the teeth of staggering odds. Familiar to us all is the epic of her soul-stirring triumph over a legion of obstacles.

Nor are we far away from spiritual *sadbana* when we think of Father Damien who cast in his lot with the 700 lepers of Molokai (one of the Hawaii islands), became physician to their souls and bodies, their teacher, carpenter, gardener, cook, and even scavenger at need. He escaped contagion for twelve years, but not longer; yet continued his labour till his death in 1889.

Millions all over the world remain untouched by the dread scourge of malaria, while whole areas on earth have been rendered habitable, healthy and prosperous, because Sir Ronald Ross imperilled his life to demonstrate the route of the malaria parasite from the stomach of the infected mosquito through its salivary gland into healthy blood. He carried on his four years' research under heart-breaking conditions, risking health and life in a grilling climate.²

Equally well worth recalling is the sterling service rendered by Mme Curie to the endless train of badly wounded soldiers borne on stretchers from the Marne front in World War I. She fitted out twenty "radiological cars" equipped with dynamo and X-Ray apparatus, which on receipt of a telegram or telephone drove her to the military hospital at Verdun, Ypres, or Amiens. What distinguished her great work of mercy is common knowledge — the thought of self simply did not exist for her, while she subjected

¹ Four times in her life she heard the voice.

² It was his discovery that made possible the construction of the Panama Canal.

herself to the severest hardships and privation, she shrank from fame and the public gaze which caused her no small uneasiness.³

She was a born ascetic. The patient toiler up the Mountain Path to the Great Light may profitably bear in mind such beacon-lights. But in God's eyes sincere selfless service of the humblest sort must weigh as much as heroic actions done by exceptionally dowered people. As Robert Browning says :

" All service ranks the same with God —
With God whose puppets, best and
worst,
Are we ; there is no last nor first ".⁴

Now that we have dealt with a high earthly value, we may ask : " Can we look upon this, the noblest of all ideals, as our Journey's End ? To consider this noble mundane striving to alleviate suffering as Supreme End, rests on a paradox and on a fallacy. The paradox lies in the continuance of suffering as the condition precedent for it. The fallacy consists in thinking that the suffering inbuilt in all animate existence can be abolished some day.

So long as we are encased in this house of flesh, this " mortal coil ",⁵ pain and suffering are our lot. Said the sage of the *Swetasvatara*

Upanishad in unforgettable words : " Only on that day will come the end of sorrow, when *without knowing God* men roll up the heavens as a parchment ".⁶ Declares the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in no uncertain terms : " Verily even while we are here (in this body) we can realize *That* (the Self). Should we remain in ignorance, dire is our ruin. Those who have realized It become immortal, while others go only to sorrow ".⁷

Only action or service dedicated to God and rendered in a spirit of detachment will make our Liberation ; so say the *Bhagavad Gita* and Sri Bhagavan.

The riddle of pain and suffering will never be solved by human reason. The tangled knot of the ironies and 'satires of circumstances' will snap asunder, as the Upanishad says, when He is seen — who is both Being and Becoming.⁸

³ Eve Curle's *Madame Curie* is a masterpiece.

⁴ *Pippa Passes*.

⁵ *Hamlet*, III, I, 67.

⁶ *Swetasvatara* (VI-20) :

" *yada charmavad akasam veshtayishyanti manavah tada daivam avijnaya dukkhasyanto bhaviyatish.*" (*charmavat* (lit) like a skin).

⁷ VI, 4-14.

⁸ II., 11-9 (*Mundaka*).

Disciple : Upto what point is *sadhana* or practice essential ?

Guru : Ceaseless practice is essential until one experiences without the least effort that natural and primal state of the mind which is free from thought, in other words, until the 'I', 'my' and 'mine' are completely eradicated.

— Sri Bhagavan, *A Catechism
of Spiritual Instruction.*

God of the Everyday

By Derek Neville

I will not have God in his heaven,
And part of his creation
Still in hell.

I want him sliding down the moon-beams,
Hauling the tides,
Or holding up the sun ;
Majestic, strong and perfect.
Oh — I want him there
— Wherever beauty is,
Living and glowing like some hidden fire
Behind the flowers,
Or flowing in the wind,
Or falling, like a blessing, in the dew.

I want him strewn in primrose-covered woods,
Pure like the yellow there among the leaves ;
Or blazing with the sun,
Or scattered o'er the canopy of night
In never-ending furnaces of power.

All this I want
But this is not enough.

I want God grimy with the grime of men
Hewing the face of coal ;
Glistening in sweat
On brows, tired of work,
I want God dirty with the dirt of towns,
All soot-encrusted there among the chimney-pots.

I want heaven and God put back where they belong
— Waiting on earth
Until men come to see
The glory of the every-day
Behind their greed and blindness.
Oh — he shall sing with birds upon the bough.
And he shall ride up there among the blue,
Until that joy has risen like a spring
In the dark night of cities,
Among the earth-bound,
And the dead.

Then, then shall he be waiting
 Like a jewel
 Hid in the dark, clay-shuttered
 Souls of men.

Freed, at long last, from pulpit
 And from pew,
 From sect and creed,
 From Litany and Mass ;
 No longer what we seek,
 But what we've found —
 Here, on the common earth,
 In common ways,
 God of the every-day —
 With every heart a manger,
 And every life a throne.

Were I given a hundred thousand tongues instead of one,
 And the hundred thousand multiplied twenty-fold,
 A hundred thousand times would I say, and say again,
 The Lord of all the world is one,
 That is the path that leads,
 These the steps that mount,
 Ascend thus to the Lord's mansion
 And with Him be joined in unison.
 The sound of the songs of heaven thrills
 The like of us who crawl, but desire to fly,
 O Nanak, His grace alone it is that fulfils,
 The rest mere prattle, and a lie.
 Ye have no power to speak or in silence listen,
 To grant or give away,
 Ye have no power to live or die.
 Ye have no power to acquire wealth and dominion,
 To compel the mind to thought or reason,
 To escape the world and fly.
 He who hath the pride of power, let him try and see.
 O Nanak, before the Lord there is no low or high degree.

— *Guru Nanak.*

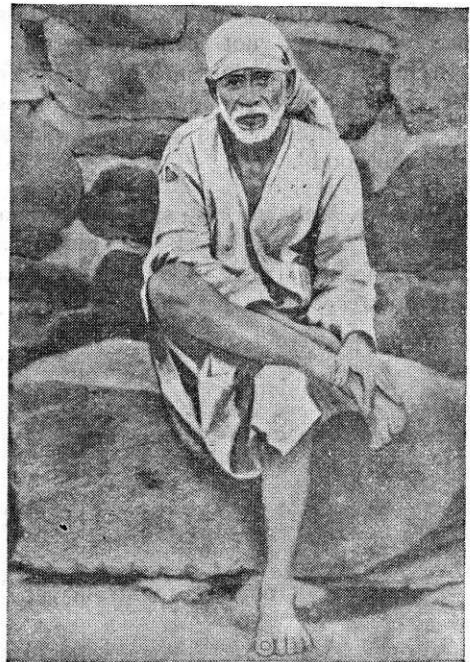
Two Spiritual Sayings of Sri Sai Baba

By
I. S. Verghese

SRI SAI BABA of Shirdi who departed from this world in 1918 was a man of God as borne out by his life and miracles. He was not a silent saint nor a man of few words, but advised, admonished and exhorted at great length as the occasion demanded. Even then, there are a few brief and cryptic sayings of his which bear close study and contemplation.

One saying of his, which he repeated constantly throughout his life is *Allab Mallik* which when translated literally, means "God is the Chief". The word 'Mallik' in the Urdu language connotes 'caretaker' — person responsible — 'person who runs the show' and so on, according to the context. The word 'Mallik' can also mean 'God'. Sri Sai Baba was conveying that God is the one who rules the world and who is ultimately the dispenser of everything. When we meditate on this cryptic saying, so many new facets of it reveal themselves. A great calamity strikes us and we are in a downcast mood, utterly hopeless and dejected and then — *Allab Mallik* — and the light shines; Ah! it has happened with the knowledge of God and He has permitted it to happen. And we look at it in a different light. Are we in money difficulties, unable to meet our creditors and to make both ends meet? *Allab Mallik* — This is with the permission of God to whom belongs everything and whose treasury is overflowing. What could be better than surrendering ourselves to Him?

But this great truth, which is axiomatic for those treading the religious path, has often to be thrust upon others by some great cataclysm in life. Only then do they come to acknowledge that Allah is the Mallik. The ordinary man is like Gehazi, the servant of prophet



Sri Sai Baba

Elisha, in the Bible.¹ When surrounded by the armies of the King of Syria, Gehazi grew apprehensive about his and his master's lives. Elisha prayed to God to open the eyes of Gehazi and then he saw around them a heavenly army of men, horses and chariots, enclosing them in a ring of protection. We see so many cases of what we think are "undeserved" suffering — *Allab Mallik*. He has some purpose in view — we have seen only a little bit of the matter in time and space; but Allah knows all and has dispensed His justice. It teaches us submission — it gives us an inkling of the power and grace of God.

¹ II Kings, 6/17.

Another saying of Sri Sai Baba is "What is with us is with us, and what is with them is with them". This he often stated when confronted by someone bringing up the faults of others. It meant that it is of absolutely no benefit for us to discuss the shortcomings of others, for our merits and demerits are with us and it is the same with the others. In other words, we reap the fruits of our actions and others of their actions, and we need not take offence at anything not concerning us. It also reflects the aphorism of the *Yoga Sutras* depicting the proper attitude of aspirants — 'Indifference to evil and gladness towards the good'.

Sri Ramana Maharshi also says — "A man's actions are reflected back to him" and "Beings reap the fruits of their actions and God is not responsible for them."

Much of the casual conversation in ordinary lives is concerned with the faults of others, and how much of chagrin and heartburn can be eliminated if this spiritual truth sinks into one — "What is with us is with us and what is with them is with them". Once Sri Sai Baba came to know by his Divine vision about some disparaging remarks a visitor to Shirḍi had made of someone else when he had gone for a bath and on the visitor's coming into his presence, Sri Sai Baba admonished: "You went for a bath, but you were wallowing in filth like a pig"! It went home, and the man became penitent.

Such are spiritual sayings — when we really understand them, we are nearer the Source of our Being. And in that Sanctuary, there is the silent invocation — *Allah Mallik*.

DO THINE ALLOTTED TASK

No man shall escape from act

By shunning action ; nay and none shall come

By mere renouncements unto perfectness ;

Nay, and no jot of time, at any time,

Rests any actionless ; his nature's law

Compels him, even unwilling, into act.

(For thought is act in fancy)

. . . He who, with strong body serving mind,

Gives up his mortal powers to worthy work,

Not seeking gain, Arjuna ! such a one

Is honourable.

Do thine allotted task.

— *The Bhagavad Gita* (III-4/8)

You are not your Body

By

Marie B. Byles

MODERN medicine assumes that what matters is a person's body and making it well — or trying to. Even when the patient is in extreme old age, every effort is made to keep the body alive a little longer and still a little longer — and this by painful means if necessary.

'They are always giving him some new remedy,' bewailed the patient's daughter, 'And often they are very painful.'

A nursing sister said to an eminent specialist, 'Doctor, why don't you wait for the autopsy until the man has died?' The doctor was a scientist. He was not amused.

A woman is badly injured in a motor car accident. At once she is rushed to the intensive-care-ward of the nearest hospital, and every effort is made to pull her body back to life — at least temporarily. And nurses and doctors are very clever these days at making the body well — again, at least temporarily. I once listened to the pastor at a church-hospital saying a long prayer at the sick one's bedside, telling God how he should make the man well, that is, the man's body. It seemed a little superfluous to tell God what to do, but leaving this aside, we cannot overlook the absence of any reference to the inner peace that could only come from complete surrender to God. The pastor aimed at an optimistic outlook which would bring the physical recovery of the body. Afterwards I meekly suggested that there was really only one prayer, 'Thy will be done.' But I doubt if he even knew what I meant.

And then there is the form of greeting in the West. 'How do you do?' or 'How are you?' True, it is only a formality, and the questioner would not appreciate it if the one questioned started to detail his complaints, but once again it is the body that is referred to.

It may be objected that all I have said relates to the West, and that in the East people are more conscious of the spiritual essence. I hope that is right, but with the craze for copying the West, I fear that what I have said *will* refer to the East also if it does not already do so. And in fact people who came to see Ramana Maharshi often had to be reminded that they were not the body, not by his refraining from the question 'How are you?' but by asking the question 'who *are* you?'

Two and a half thousand years earlier Gautama the Buddha appears to have posed the same question, or something like it. Sariputta, his leading disciple, said to the sick and aged Nakulapitar, 'You are not your body, are you?' Nakulapitar had just come from meeting the Buddha and was radiantly happy; he said it was as if he had been sprinkled with ambrosia. He replied, 'No, I only carry the body about. The Master said that to depend upon the body for happiness is to depend upon what is always changing and decaying, but that there is an ever-present refuge in the Self, an island of refuge amid the storms of life's suffering.' The logically-minded Sariputta carried the moral further, 'Yes, that is true; the many folk identify themselves with their bodies, saying "I suffer", when they really mean that the body suffers. But the disciple of the Aryan Eightfold Path says "I am not the Body." He then feels no repugnance to pain, for he is no longer possessed by his body.'

Throughout the ages adherents of the Christian Church have paid much attention to the healing of the body whether by miracles, doctors or faith. They thereby felt that they were following in the steps of Christ who is reported to have performed great miracles of healing. We shall never know whether he placed foremost these bodily healings or the

quest for the Self, or the Kingdom of God, to use his own expression. There is that very interesting record of how he told the one who was healed to go away and 'sin no more'. And he may well have regarded his miracles of healing as the least important of his works.

It is certainly one of our tasks in life to extend help to all. But there is no more virtue in the work of a devoted nurse who does her work with compassion than in the work of a garbage remover who does his work similarly. It is the spirit in which the work is done that alone matters. It may therefore be asked whether the importance attached to the work done for the body is not opposed to the main quest for life, the search for the Self, or the Kingdom of God, which is beyond all that the senses can perceive. Who are we? We are obviously not the body. There is the Deathless, Formless, Infinite and Intangible.

'Let the body speak for itself,' said Marcus Aurelius. By identifying ourselves with the body, that is, with what is transient, we are not only hindering the quest for the Self, we are also neglecting the opportunity that pain and suffering give us to further this quest. In his late life the American Buddhist monk, Sumangalo, unexpectedly found that he had the ability to heal mental diseases. After curing about three hundred he woke up to the fact that only about three of those cured had benefited morally or spiritually. The rest returned to their former lives of 'pettiness, self-centredness, malicious gossip, sharp business practices, lechery, adultery, gluttony and what have you.'¹ Why not leave them as they were, was his reaction. They had learned nothing from their illnesses and certainly not the way to find the first object of living life on earth.

We may not understand why the suffering of the body has come, not why in some cases it is cured and in others, not. We each have different theories, but none of us really know. What we do know and can each find out in our own experience is that there is always a lesson that we can learn from the suffering of the body. And we are foolish to put the cure of the body before anything else includ-

ing the lesson that we can learn, and we are more foolish still if we turn aside in despair or worse still in suicide. The cure of the body or the ending of the body is a detail. The finding of the Self is vital. 'Which would you rather go in search of,' said the Buddha, 'The woman who has taken your belongings or your Self?' Under the Buddha's irresistible smile the young man of course replied, 'The Self.' And would we not reply similarly if the alternative were the cure of the sick body?

In my profession of a lawyer I have often been called to make wills for the sick and elderly. Among these was an old lady in a nursing home. She was crippled with arthritis, constantly in pain and had to be helped into the room by two nurses. She seemed to radiate something of what must have shone from the great spiritual teachers. I asked her the secret of her joyous serenity in painful old age. She replied, 'I think it must be because I have so much to be thankful for.' Thankful! Most people would have said, 'So much to complain of.' But she had accepted her illness as a blessing. She had not recovered, but she had acquired something more valuable than good health. I was told that she was a practising Catholic. Whatever the outward form of her religion, she had learned through her suffering to chip away little by little the obstacle of Ego and had 'surrendered'. Ramana Maharshi often used the term 'surrender'. Probably this woman quoted the words of Christ, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me'. However the woman described it, she had certainly learned that she was not the body.

But who am I to write about this? I still feel repugnance to pain, and elation at good health for a short spell. All I can say is that I am aware of what is happening, and admit that I am still in the thralldom of the body.

A final thought — is our Western belief that we are the body the cause of our fear of death and deliberate prolongation of life no matter what the suffering?

¹ *The Light and the Gate* by R. C. Johnson.

Sri Rama Instructs Lakshmana

Translation from Sanskrit text by
M. C. Subramanian

THE *Adhyatma Ramayana*, an old Sanskrit work, which gives a spiritual interpretation to the well-known *Ramayana* of Valmiki, relates how at Panchavati Sri Rama gave *upadesa* to Lakshmana.

Lakshmana : Bhagavan ! I wish to know the proper method of attaining Liberation. O Best of Raghus ! Tell me in brief how one acquires dispassion through devotion and realizes the Self.

Sri Rama : Brother, I shall explain to you the secret of secrets by knowing which one overcomes the delusion caused by erroneous imagination. I shall explain to you the nature of *maya* first, then the means of acquiring knowledge and finally what is true and enlightening wisdom. I shall tell you also about the Supreme Self by knowing which one casts off fear.

Although the body (mind and so on), are not the Self, everyone because of *maya* thinks that they are. This is *samsara*. *Maya* has got two aspects, one in which it assumes the form of the physical and mental world inclusive of Brahma (the Creator) and the other in which it thoroughly conceals what really exists. The Absolute and Supreme Self appears as the world. It is like a rope looking like a snake (in dim light). Investigation will show that the world does not really exist. Whatever one sees or hears or thinks is as unreal as dreams and fancies. Attachment to the body is the deep root of the tree of *samsara*. From it arises attachment to wife and children. Are they different from oneself ? The body is composed of the five gross elements split up and combined according to the law of fives.¹ The ego, the intellect, the ten senses, the mind, the reflection of the Absolute Consciousness and primal nature (*mula prakriti*) form the field (*ksbetra*) and is known as the embodied *Jiva*. The Self is distinct from these. It is really

the Supreme, free from imperfection of any kind.

Now listen to the method of realizing the Self. The term 'individual Self' and 'Supreme Self' are synonymous. There is no difference between them. Humility, absence of pride, non-violence, fortitude, straightforwardness, devoted service to the Sad-Guru, outer and inner purity, steadiness in doing good deeds, control of the body, mind and speech, aversion to sense pleasures, absence of egoism, thinking about birth, old age, and death, dispassion, non-attachment to wife, sons and riches, constant equanimity of mind in pleasant and unpleasant circumstances of life, unswerving devotion to Me, the Self of all, resort to solitude, distaste for the society of worldly people, constant effort to acquire Self-Knowledge, perception of philosophical (Vedantic) truths — these constitute Wisdom (*Jnana*). What is different from these is ignorance.

'I am the Self which is constant awareness, always taintless and self-effulgent, distinct from the body, the vital force (*prana*), the mind, the intellect and the ego'. This conviction is true Knowledge. When this conviction becomes a matter of constant experience it is Wisdom. The Self is Perfect in every way. It is Consciousness-Bliss. It knows no decay. It has no adjuncts like the intellect. It does not undergo any change (like, birth, growth, decay and death). It activates the body, senses and mind by its mere presence without revealing itself. It is Absolute Truth, Absolute Awareness, non-dual. It is unlimited and self-luminous. It is the ultimate Secret of everything ; one knows it by direct experi-

¹*panchikarana* : a physical law under which half of each of the five elements combines with one eighth each of the other elements.

ence. When with the help of the Acharya (spiritual teacher) and the scriptures, one realizes the identity of the individual self and the Supreme Self, the primal nescience disappears along with its instruments of action. That state is known as Liberation (*mukti*).²

I have thus explained to you the nature of Liberation, O Scion of Raghus, along with the knowledge and wisdom relating to Me who am the Supreme Self. This cannot easily be understood by those who are not devoted to me. They are like people who cannot see their feet at night even if they have eyes. Only those who carry a light with them can see them. Even so the Self can be comprehended only by those who are devoted to Me.

I shall explain briefly how devotion to me grows in a person. By keeping the company of my devotees, serving them constantly, fasting on *ekadasi*³ and observing religiously the days which are sacred to Me, taking delight in reading or listening eagerly about Me, worshipping Me with devotion and chanting My Name, one develops unswerving devotion to Me. What

more is necessary? My devotee will certainly acquire knowledge, wisdom and dispassion and attain Liberation.

I have thus explained to you everything that you wanted to know. When this Knowledge becomes steady one attains Liberation. This should not be divulged to those who are not devoted to Me. But this should be imparted to My devotees even if they are not intelligent enough to take interest in it. Once who reads this dialogue of ours daily with devotion will get enlightened and liberated from bondage. Liberation is within easy reach of My devotees and yogis, whose minds are pure (free from desires) and tranquil, and who take delight in constantly serving Me. He who attends on them constantly and serves them with unswerving devotion will also attain Liberation. There is no other way of seeking Me and realizing Me, the One Self of all.

² The Self is ever-liberated and therefore it is only in common parlance it is said to be liberated.

³ The eleventh day after new moon and full moon.

Disciple : If really there is neither bondage nor liberation how can there be the unmistakable experience of memory in the world or ignorant infatuation for it?

Guru : These are experienced as if they are real only when one strays away from the natural and primal state of pure Being and never while abiding therein.

Disciple : Is it possible for everyone to know beyond all doubt and by direct and immediate experience that what he knows is really the natural and primal state.

Guru : Most certainly. For everyone it is undoubtedly possible.

— Sri Bhagavan, *A Catechism of Spiritual Instruction.*

SIMPLE TRUTHS

By
Radhika Mohon Sen

WE should return again and again to the simple truths explained by Sri Bhagavan for our benefit. He recommended the path either of "Surrender" or the enquiry "Who am I?"

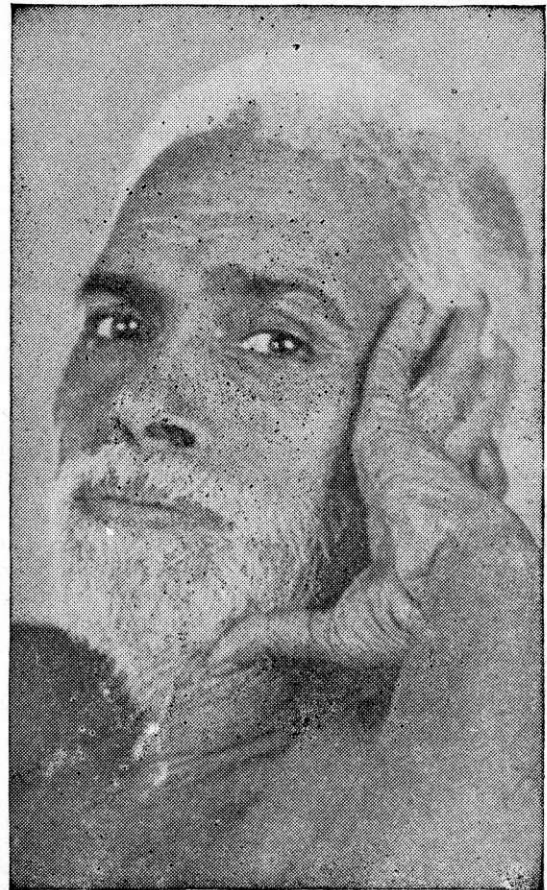
Sri Bhagavan once said, "Ask any successful man in this world if he knows his self. He will say 'No'. But how can anybody know anything without first knowing himself?" (*Talks* p. 59). What a simple statement and how full of significance!

Of all the wonders in this world is the simple fact that one does not know one's true self. What one knows of oneself are one's physical body, one's habits, one's tastes, one's ideas and ideals which constitute one's personality, the sum-total of which one takes to be oneself.

But is it a correct understanding of one's true self? Habits change, ideas and ideals too change as one's knowledge grows and expands. The sum total of all these, which one feels to be one's individuality, is thus liable to change. That which changes cannot be real. Reality never changes. It is eternally the same, otherwise it cannot be Reality. Changing peculiarities in character, habits or thoughts, which usually constitute one's individuality cannot be one's real self.

Now let us examine if there is anything eternal in us, which is really one's self.

When we awake in the morning, our minds get busy with different thoughts. Various thoughts arise and we are influenced by them. Our activities are directed either to bringing about events which we expect to be pleasurable to us or to avoiding situations which may be unpleasant for us. Thus from morning till night we entertain different



thoughts, and perform various actions and experience emotions which result from them.

Then at night we fall asleep.

If the sleep is not deep and sound we have dreams. There, too, our mental activities continue, though in a feeble and less reasoned way than in the waking state.

When we pass into sound or deep sleep, what happens?

The world of which we are conscious during our waking state completely vanishes and all our possessions which we cling to during our waking state exist no longer or are no longer ours. Everything passes off into oblivion. Yet we feel quite fresh, happy, re-invigorated when we wake up from sound sleep. We say, "I slept happily."

The question arises, who has this experience of sleeping happily?

We find that all through the various mental activities through which we pass during our waking state or in our dreams, or even in sound sleep, when we are quite oblivious of this world, there is some conscious principle existing in us. This conscious principle is ever present and is conscious of the happiness which the sound sleep brought to us, as well as of the absence of this material world and its attending cares and anxieties during sleep.

This conscious principle is therefore present in us all through, in all states, and never forsakes us. This conscious principle has been referred to in our scriptures as *Achyuta Sārathi*, the ever-present guide.

Why do not we feel the presence of this guide, the consciousness pure and simple, in the ordinary course of our life?

Because we, by our habit, have become so gross that we can perceive only sense-objects and nothing else.

We may however enjoy this pure being-awareness when our mind is free from all thoughts and resting at its source.

In sound sleep the Self stands by itself. It is pure and unalloyed. But it is still covered with ignorance. If we can by constant practice make our mind quite still and thoughtfree, and yet remain vigilant, then and then only will that awareness shine forth in our hearts in all its clarity and purity.

Behind all knowledge and all thinking there is one indivisible ever-present awareness residing in our hearts. But we are so extrovert that we do not recognize or enjoy this ever-present awareness.

To explain this mistake, Maharshi uses an illustration. In a cinema show, we the spectators enjoy the various scenes, the swelling oceans, the eruption of volcanoes, the devastation caused by earthquakes, the burning of cities and so on, but fail to notice the existence of the screen upon which all those pictures are projected. The existence of the screen background is a condition precedent to the pictures being seen and enjoyed.

"Pure awareness in every one of us is the background upon which all our thoughts and mental activities are projected. By this light of the heart alone the mind perceives the world."

— *Katha Upanishad*, 5-15.

"Pure awareness alone exists. Being and awareness are inseparable. It is the I, the Self, that dwells in the hearts of all beings."

— *Bhagavad Gita*, x. 20.

May Sri Maharshi, who is this pure awareness residing in the hearts of all and sustaining all, enable us to perceive this light within us.

The scent of flowers does not travel against the wind, nor that of sandalwood, or of *tagara* and *mallika* flowers, but the odour of good people travels even against the wind, a good man pervades every place.

— *Dhammapada*.

Hindu Iconology—2**Lord Subrahmanya¹**

By

S. Shankaranarayanan

The term Subrahmanya means one who is established in the most auspicious Reality of Brahman, as such. He is the Son of Siva, the Dweller in the Cave of the Heart, himself known as Guha, beyond the range of mental comprehension, the Light Supreme destroying the forces of darkness with his Lance (the glance of Grace). He is described thus in the *dhyaana sloka* of his *mantra*: “*OM Vachadbhuve Namah,*” referred to in verse 10 of Ch. XVIII of *Sri Ramana Gita*. Bhagavan Ramana has translated this *sloka* as a verse in Tamil, at the request of a devotee, incorporating the name ‘Ramana’ as well in it—EDITOR.

SPORTING in the sleepless inner fields, hidden in the waveless deep, there dwells the delicate one, wonderful by birth, the Infinite’s Son. With many an obeisance his succour I seek”²

Harder than adamant, softer than a flower, is Lord Subrahmanya. The most ancient wisdom rests lightly on his unaging youth. Beauty and Power vie with each other in the person of this god. Dashing force and calm repose blend here in happy harmony. The Will Divine, he also represents human will aspiring for perfection.

The Tamils claim this godhead as their own. To them he is Muruga, the ever-fresh beauty, the fragrance of youth, the love that holds the whole creation in its life-giving embrace. He is also the hero, engaged in the endless war against evil, the victor vanquishing every foe. He is *cevvai*, the red god of hill and dale, the lover of *Valli*, the rustic beauty.

The concept of this godhead is as old as the Vedas. There he is the Divine Child, *Kumāra*, the son of Force, *sabhasputra*, Agni, flaming Fire. Citing *rik* after *rik* from the *Rig Veda* and passages from the Vanaparva of the *Mahabharata*, Sri Kapali Sastriar has shown³ that Kumāra, the Divine Child, is a special manifestation of *Agni Adbhuta*, the Wonder



*Lord Subrahmanya, with His Consorts,
Valli and Devasena*

¹The younger of Siva’s two sons. An article on Ganesa, the elder, appeared in our last issue, p. 22.

²*Kumarastava* by T. V. Kapali Sastriar.

³see *Further Lights : The Veda and the Tantra* by T. V. Kapali Sastriar, pp. 59-72.

that is Fire. The great Vāsishtha Ganapati Muni, expounding the concepts of godheads, says approvingly that Skanda is the Fire stationed on earth, *parthivah agnih iti Kapali*. The Agni of the Vedas then has evolved into the Kumāra of the Puranas. The *Chandōgya Upanishad* identifies Skanda with the youthful sage Sanatkumāra who shows the shore beyond darkness, *tamasas pāram darsayati bhagavān sanatkumārah tam skanda ityācakṣate*.

According to the Puranas, Kumara is the great effulgence that has emanated from the All-Father, Siva. He is born in the growths of the earth, the bed of reeds *saravana*, and placed in the waters of Ganga where he increases in stature. He is taken up and fostered by the six stars of the cluster Krittika and then brought to Pārvati.

Let us try to understand the import of the names by which he is adored. He is Skanda, the Force that is released *skanna* from above. The Puranic story runs as follows: The gods wanted a Commander to lead them in battle against the Asuras. Indra, King of the gods, approached Siva for aid. The great god released his seed. As he is *urdbva retah*, one whose vital fluid courses upwards, the seed came out through his third eye as a spark of fire. Unable to bear it Fire dopped it in the waters. The waters could not bear it and deposited it on a bed of reeds, where the Mothers of Light, six in number, fostered and nourished the Divine Birth. The story is full of significance. In times of dire distress, in response to Prayer, and out of great compassion, the Divine condescends to descend. It sends a Force, its own emanation, the Son of God, for the succour of created beings. From rarer and subtler realms the Force comes down to the gross physical, involving itself in the whole of creation.

This is Kumāra, the Child Divine, that is ever taking birth in each aspiring heart. He is the eternal youth not subject to age, decay or death. He is the guide, the *senāpati*, who leads the gods in battle. One of his consorts is Devasena, the army of gods. The other consort is Valli, Chidvalli, the creeper of consciousness growing upwards. As the Lord of Devasena and Valli, he rules the Divine and physical consciousness. His weapon is the

Sakti, Vel, representing Force indomitable. The cock on his banner is the harbinger of the dawn and heralds spiritual awakening. The peacock, his vehicle, symbolises Nature in all her varied hues and moods, but ever in the end victorious. The repository of all knowledge, he imparts it even to his Father, Siva. So he is known as *Swāminātha*, master of the Lord, *Sivaguru*, Teacher of Siva. The secret fire of knowledge burning in the heart of every living being, the teacher in the heart-cave, *Guruguba*, he is in the last analysis Guha, the Heart itself.

Most of the temples dedicated to this god-head are situated on hill-tops, the elevation symbolising the heavenward yearning of the earth. The six famous camps (*padai veedus*) of this Divine Commander-in-Chief, set in sylvan surroundings in the Tamil country are Tiruchendur, Tirupparankunram, Tiruvavinankudi (Palni), Tiruverakam (Swamimalai), Pazhamudirsolai (Aḷagarkoil) and Tiruttani.⁴ These six shrines for his worship stand for the six centres of consciousness, *adbara Chakras* in the human body, each governed by one of the six faces of Shanmukha. Though this god-head is the War-Lord, the Commander-in-chief, in iconology, he is depicted not in a fighting mood, like Rudra or Kali, but as the calm Victor, full of strength and charm, majestically seated on his peacock, with Valli and Devasena, on either side. He has a benign countenance and has four hands, one in the gesture of warding off fear *abhaya*, the second granting boon, *vara*, the third holding the *pasa*, the noose that binds in a bond of love and the fourth holding the *ankusa*, the spike that destroys evil. At times he is depicted as a child on the lap of Uma, herself seated on the lap of Siva. The whole configuration, *Somāskanda*, Siva with Umā and Skanda — Father, Mother and Child, embodies pure Existence in union with Consciousness and Bliss. There are icons of Shanmukha with six faces and twelve arms, these latter holding an array of weapons. In fact, this is one of the gods who is represented in more than one stance in the icons. The most interesting of all is the representation as a mendicant with a

⁴ Or, all hills together — *Kunruthorādala*.

loin cloth, one hand on his waist and the other holding a staff *Danda*. This form of Dandapani portrays the knowledge aspect of the godhead, begging for alms though endowed with all wisdom.

This knowledge aspect of the Deity has again and again descended on earth in human form in order to save mankind from ignorance. In the past, Kumarila Bhatta and Jñānasambandha had been proclaimed as Avatars of Skanda. In our own times, Sri Ramana

Maharshi has been recognised by discerning mystics as a manifestation of Subrahmanya. Sri Maharshi regarded Arunachala Siva as his Father. Son of God, immortal amongst the mortals, he has been dispelling the gloom in the heart of all beings by his silent glance. Now released from the bond of the physical body, his Force is irresistible and, like Sanatkumara of old, or the beacon on the Hill, beckons to all those who would reach the other shore beyond the darkness of ignorance.

O LORD RAMANA !

“Some worship Thee as the foremost among Yogis, some as a Jnani, others as an ascetic, and others as their Guru ; but though all of them equally revere Thy holy feet, Oh Thou Who art born on this earth as Ramana for the good of humanity ! yet, only two or three among men can recognise Thee as that Celestial Subrahmanya seated on the lap of Mother Parvathi.

“Thou expounded the significance of *Aum* to Brahma, the Lord of Sarasvati (Goddess of learning) ; Thy mouth opened to instruct the truth to your father, Siva, too. Thou hast of Thy wisdom come out now as the preceptor of Thy elder brother, Ganapathi. Though young, Oh Subrahmanya ! Thou hast, by Thy merits, outstripped all Thy elders !

“Now, when righteousness is at an end, when the three worlds are struggling in the net-work of misery, when scholars having lost sight of Truth are learnedly discussing polemics to no end, and when the very existence of God, the Father, is disputed, who else could be our Refuge ? Oh Subrahmanya, now born as Ramana !”

— from *Forty Verses in Praise of
Sri Ramana*, v. 15, 16, 18.

The Desert Fathers

By
Gladys Dehm

THE writings of the Desert Fathers date from between the third and seventh centuries, before the eleventh-century schism which split the Eastern and Western Churches.

They were compiled in the eighteenth century under the name *Philokalia*. These writings were penned by saintly ascetics who had voluntarily embraced the solitudes and silence of the wilderness in their quest for Self-Knowledge.

They taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is within the reach of every man whose heart is sincerely orientated towards union with his Creator. The nature of man which is tripartite must be made single, his ignorance must be dissipated by the light of Knowledge in order that the state of perfect peace may be acquired through the operation of divine Grace. Constant effort is necessary, the lover of God must be ever on the alert against apathy, discouragement, doubt, fear, and other manifestations of the dark forces within himself. Invocation of the Divine Name is the powerful weapon to be used against these hostile forces; it is the means whereby the soul is raised from darkness to Radiant Silence.

The Fathers taught also that the powerful activity of the mind is seated in the innermost core of the soul, namely the heart. Being incorporeal it is not contained as in a vessel neither is it joined to something within ourselves from outside. St. Gregory of Palamas further explains this by quoting the words found in St. Mathew 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man . . . For out of the heart proceed . . . thoughts.'

Another Father states: 'The heart is sovereign of the entire organism, and when the different parts of the heart are taken over by

grace, the heart is ruler over all thoughts and members, for therein is contained the mind and the soul's thoughts.'

It is within this 'secret closet' that the lover of God holds heavenly converse, and it is within the citadel of his heart that man must wage battle against the stormy attacks of the enemy.

The Fathers taught that every effort must be made to steady the mind, and one method approved by them was breathing exercises. This in order to lead the mind into itself, for when one meditates deeply the breath is inhaled and exhaled slowly. Thus, spiritual Sabbath is kept when the passionate movements of the soul are held in check and there remains sweet repose from negative activity.

The writings of the Desert Fathers have now been translated from their Russian and Greek texts, enabling us to profit from their spiritual richness.

St. Mark the Ascetic

'If a man loves truth and desires to protect his heart, then he can be stopped from being beguiled by the impressions he has received heretofore, but can pay attention to his heart, be drawn towards the innermost, drawing closer to God, provided prayer and good living is not neglected by him.

'Those who have sinned must not give way to despair. Never let that happen. We are condemned not for the quantity of evils but because we are unrepentant.

'Prayer must be unceasing. So it must be preferred above other occupations which are not unavoidably necessary . . .

'Let us begin then the activity of prayer and, progressing gradually, we shall discover

not only trust in God but also steadfast faith and sincere love. It is not possible that the likeness of God be re-established in oneself except by Divine grace and faith, which is given a man when his mind is wholly fixed with deep humility in unceasing prayer.

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.' This signifies that the mind, having been made the repository of the word of the Lord, concealed it in the tripartite being, made of, according to the Apostle, of body, soul and spirit; and it has brought together their fineness into one leaven of faith.

'He who through divine yearning has become the victor of his soul's desire towards the physical, receives freedom from limitations while still in the body.

'The Sabbath of sabbaths is the repose of a sagacious soul, which does not allow the mind to dwell on even Divine 'words' hidden in mysterious fashion in creatures, and, wrapped in ecstatic love, has clothed the mind completely in God alone, so that acquiring mysterious understanding of Him, the soul has inseparably fixed the mind on God.'

* * *

St. Maximus

'When the mind rises to God through the urging of love, it experiences no sensation either of itself or of anything else. It is rendered insensible to all things created by the glory of the Divine radiance which illumines it, just as the stars in the effulgence of the sun affect not the physical eye.

'When you are humiliated and insulted by one, take heed of angry thoughts, for you will be severed from love and taken to where hatred dwells.

'Do not soil your mind by harbouring lustful and angry thoughts; for you will cast yourself out of the realm of pure prayer, and fall prey to despondency.

'When the mind holds converse with wicked and impure thoughts it loses its bold course towards God.

'It is a major achievement not to be attached to things, but a greater achievement is to be passionless towards their images; for the battle that wicked spirits engage against us through thoughts is much more arduous than the battle to which the things themselves give rise.

'A soul can never attain to knowledge of God, if God Himself does not condescendingly touch it and lift it to Himself.

'The holy man Moses began his worship of God only after having placed his tabernacle outside the camp; which signifies his having grounded his heart and mind beyond all things visible.

'In its spiritual sense circumcision signifies the total cutting off of leaning towards lust.

'Sabbath signifies the calming down of passionate activity, or their total inactivity.'

* * *

St. Abba Dorotheus

'Humility puts to flight all the weapons of the adversary. All the saints trod the path of humility and worked hard for it. . . . humility cannot be roused to anger, neither can it arouse anger in anyone. Humility draws the grace of God to the soul . . .

' . . . of the two kinds of humility the first recognizes the fact that one's brother possesses better judgement and is definitely superior to oneself — or recognizes one's inferiority to all men. The second humility attributes all the things achieved by oneself solely to God. This is the perfection of humility practised by the saints.

'Conscience is called the enemy because it is the adversary of our wicked will; it is a reminder to us what should be done and remains undone, and is the condemnation of actions done which should have remained undone . . .

' . . . wickedness is a disease of the soul which has lost the health given it by nature — the health which is its due is virtue.

' . . . "ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. vii. 7). It is men-

tioned, ask, so that we may obtain God's help through prayer ; to seek signifies that having knowledge of how virtue is acquired one should make sincere efforts to obtain it ; to knock signifies carrying out the commandments, for he who knocks makes use of his hands, and hands denote activity. Thus we are told not only must we ask, but we must seek and be active . . .'

* * *

St. Isaac of Syria

'No one can draw nigh unto God without leaving the world. By leaving the world I do not mean a change of physical habitat, but a leave-taking of worldly affairs. The virtue of leaving the world consists of not allowing the world to occupy the mind.

'Always bear in mind the bitter sufferings of those who are visited by sadness and afflictions, that you may give thanks for the small and trivial trials which may come to you, and be able to suffer them with gladness.

' . . . I will mention briefly that the world signifies carnal life and caring for the flesh . . .

' . . . when a man obtains silence, his soul easily recognises passions, and the inner man is awakened to spiritual activity and is victorious over them, and daily the soul is raised closer to purity.

'Life everlasting is rest in God ; he who has reached this state of repose in God considers worldly rest as of trivial worth.

'If you place on one side of the scales all spiritual practices and efforts, and on the other — silence, you will discover that silence outweighs the others.

'We should love silence so that the world may die in our hearts . . .

'When you are tempest-torn, do not become despondent ; and when peace descends upon you, do not be filled with pride . . . realise that Divine Providence sent the storm to teach us humility . . .

'A humble man makes bold only to pray in this manner ; "May Thy will be done unto me, O Lord !"

'Don simplicity when you walk before God, and do not deal in subtle workings of the mind. From simplicity springs faith, but complicated and subtle speculations usher in conceit and withdrawal from God is brought about by conceit.

'Spiritual wisdom cannot be obtained without first experiencing temptations.

'Before being afflicted, pray to God, and when the time of tribulation is upon you He will be there — and He hears you.

'When the Lord mentioned the many mansions of His Father He referred to the minds which differ in degrees which are made to dwell in that realm, which signifies the divers spiritual gifts and honours bestowed upon the mind according to its grandeur. The mansions are termed many, not because they lie in different places, but because they differ in the degree of gifts . . .

* * *

Writing from direct experience, the Desert Fathers have left us a legacy of spiritual instructions of the loftiest level.

Saint Maximus the Confessor, a native of Constantinople, was tortured and imprisoned for his adherence to truth. Exiled to Mingrelia, he died in the prison of Schemara.

Saint Isaac of Syria as he was known, was born in Nineveh. Still very young he entered the monastery of St. Mathew with his brother where having taken his vows he became a monk.

Later, the desire for solitude drove him to leave the cenobite monastery and isolate himself in a secluded cell where he embraced silence and a life devoted to contemplation.

Yielding to the pressure of his brethren, Saint Isaac left his beloved wilderness to become the pastor of his flock in Nineveh. But not for long, however. Realizing how administrative duties absorbed his time and energy, the lover of God doffed the mitre and returned to his solitary life where he remained until his death towards the latter portion of the sixth century.

Abba Dorotheus was a student of secular sciences. His parents were affluent. Two spiritual teachers, John and Barsanuphius, who had retired to the Abba Serid monastery, won the admiration and esteem of young Dorotheus who became their disciple. In time Abba Dorotheus left the monastery to become an abbot in his own right.

Saint Mark is amongst the best known of the Desert Fathers. He was of a gentle and quiet nature, much addicted from an early age to the study of the Scriptures which he knew thoroughly. Possessing a profound

knowledge of the spiritual life, Saint Mark sought to lead others towards the light by his teachings and writings, but few of his instructions have remained. The holy ascetic lived up to a ripe old age.

With one voice the Desert Fathers speak to the spiritual aspirant. 'Take heed to thyself that there be not a secret thing in thine heart, an iniquity.' (Deut. xv. 9).

It is within the secret chamber of the heart that the battle must be waged and Self-knowledge attained.

Disciple : Can a jnani be intensely active ?

Guru : The more active the less blissful ; the less active the more blissful is the *jnani*. But in either case his *jnana* remains the same. Activity, though uncongenial to the Bliss of Liberation, is not so to Liberation itself, for there is no longer the delusion of bondage in activity or non-activity.

Disciple : Since the *jnani* knows all the non-self (i.e. the objective world) to be an illusory phenomenon and therefore is not attached to anything, what makes him indulge in activity ?

Guru : In spite of being aware of the illusoriness of the body, the *jnani* begs for food to keep the body alive ; just as people enjoy a magic performance in spite of the knowledge that it is a trick of the magician or as a patient indulging in prohibited food, although aware of the risk involved.

— *Vichara Mani Mala*.

The Problem of "Waiting"

By
"Sein"

*Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?*

— WORDSWORTH

SPIRITUAL sadhana is evidently an exercise within the realm of time. So long as one has not transcended the time element, the hurdles faced in spiritual efforts, the slowness of one's progress, the absence of mile-stones, all these are felt as painful experiences. The *Kathopanishad* relates how young Nachiketas had to wait for three full days at the abode of the God of Death. Suka had to wait for seven days at King Janaka's palace-gate before he could learn the Truth from him. There is a Zen story of a master meditating inside a cave for days and opening his eyes to find his disciple waiting outside in knee-deep snow. We hear of many saints having taken years to attain illumination, while with Bhagavan Sri Ramana it was all over in twenty minutes.

Taking an ordinary worker, for example, a blacksmith, we notice that he is not conscious of the passage of time while sweating over his task. The more he is concentrated on his work, the more he is oblivious of time. Observers looking at him may be aware of time, but he is not. It can be said truly then that all serious work goes on without reference to time-consciousness. The worker knows no "waiting". The onlooker may feel it. Is spiritual effort purely mechanical in nature, that at the end of a fixed time we should have predictable results?

The legend of the contest between Brahma and Vishnu reveals how Arunachala, the column of light, transcends all notions of time

and space. The contrast between Brahma and Vishnu in their attitude to the manifestation of Arunachala is a pointer. Brahma, who takes it as a challenge to his pride, resorts to lying, making the *ketaki* flower a partner in the fraud. He pretends to have seen the top of the

Waiting

By John Burroughs (1837-1921)

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea ;
I rave no more gainst time or fate,
For, lo ! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace ?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me ;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone ?
I wait with joy the coming years ;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height ;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky ;
The tidal wave unto the sea ;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

column. Vishnu, however, confesses defeat in his attempt to compass the impossible. Lord Siva, pardoning Vishnu, says: "May you be endowed with *ksbetras* (holy places) sacred to you and may there be worship and festivals in your honour," while he orders that Brahma should have no worshippers and that the *ketaki* flower should not be used in worship.

Spiritual "waiting" therefore means humility, acceptance of limitations, surrender. One who has surrendered oneself may appear to wait but would not be conscious of it, though the onlooker may do. "Waiting" then should not be felt as a frustration but taken as an integral element of the *sadbana* of "Being".

The Master too sometimes waits as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa waited for Vivekananda. If the Master, who has transcended time, can wait, should not the disciple prepare himself and prove his eligibility by uncondi-

tional surrender? Sri Ramakrishna says: "Take my word for it, if your prayer is *āntarika* (comes from the bottom of your heart), the Mother will respond to it if you will only *wait*."

"Waiting", properly regarded, is part and parcel of *sadbana* and should be accepted as such. It is the prolonged act of submission and self-surrender which constitutes the "one step" man has to take before God takes the promised nine steps towards him. As Sri Bhagavan would say, the *sadbaka* has to put the question, "Who is this 'I' that waits?" and the response is the humble, patient, persevering waiting without seeking a "sign" till one ceases to be. Only thus can the devotee realize that there is no one waiting and nothing to wait for. If waiting is felt as a suffering, it has to be lived through, so that self-noughting is completed and what is and has ever been is experienced as bliss.

THE SEEING

.....

By Wei Wu Wei

We are actually *living* in the future. What we think is the present is factually the past.

Everything said must be untrue. Truth must penetrate like an arrow and it hurts.

Who am I? I have many names, but the oldest is TAO — DHARMA.

I am, but there is no *Me* ; I am, I experience as *Me*.

What you are looking for is what is looking.

How I Came to the Maharshi

By

T. R. A. Narayana

THE year was 1948.

I was then in my thirty-ninth year. I lived in Madras with my wife and four children. I was the Branch Manager of a large British firm, and being in happy circumstances, I did not find the need for any religious practices or spiritual enquiries ; I was content with enjoying the good things of life.

I was on a tour of small towns, with one of the Inspectors under me, Sri Parthasarathi. It was a hot April day. As Sri Parthasarathi and I were boarding the train at Villupuram to go to Tiruvannamalai, we noticed a young man of about twenty-five trying to enter the 1st Class compartment by the next door. The man was so fat that he heaved his bulky body this way and that, while another man on the platform, obviously his servant, pushed him in through the door. He was also ashamed of the curious way the people on the platform, including Sri Parthasarathi and myself, watched his predicament. He got in somehow and occupied the cubicle next to ours.

When the train had run for some minutes, the man came to our cabin, introduced himself as Ratilal Premchand Shah and started talking.

Sri Ratilal was a Saurashtra *Vaishya*, born and brought up in Gondal, the only son of his father, a rich merchant of the place. He had been married six years ago. Cursed with so much fat in his body from his tenth year, now at twenty-five, he was a huge mass of flesh and misery. How he wished to get rid of his fat and be a man !

In the last week of March, Sri Ratilal had a vision while he was asleep at night. He saw an ascetic smiling and beckoning to him. The smile and the beckoning persisted for a long



time and stood clearly before Sri Ratilal's mental eye when he awoke. He did not speak to any one about the vision. Two days later, his wife was reading a Gujarati magazine. Looking over her shoulders, he saw the picture of the ascetic he had seen in his vision. He came to know that the ascetic was Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. He at once went to his father and arranged for his journey to Tiruvannamalai with the trusted

family servant. All he knew about Bhagavan was what that Gujarati article said. But he felt sure that his suffering would end as soon as he reached Bhagavan; the smile and the beckoning of his vision of Bhagavan had given him that firm faith.

Sri Parthasarathi had had darshan of Bhagavan many times before and had also read a good deal of the literature about him. He and Sri Ratilal talked about Bhagavan during the whole two-hour journey. I was apparently reading an English novel, but heard their conversation with interest and attention.

At Tiruvannamalai station, Sri Ratilal was received by a local merchant with whom his father had arranged for his stay. Sri Parthasarathi and I proceeded to the travellers' bungalow.

It was four when we had had our bath and tiffin. Sri Parthasarathi knew that I was very business-like and would not waste a single minute. He said we could visit the market. He was very surprised at my reply: "No, Parthasarathi! We shall go and have darshan of Maharshi first. Then, if time permits, we shall go to the temple. Let business wait!"

It was about five when Sri Parthasarathi and I entered the Ashram. Going round Bhagavan's Mother's samadhi, we came to the veranda by its side. About fifty people were sitting there, Sri Ratilal, his host and his servant included. Bhagavan was not on his couch as usual. The visitors talked in whispers, trying to find out where he was.

After waiting for some ten minutes and finding that Bhagavan had not come to his seat, Sri Parthasarathi suggested to me that we could meantime go around and see the gosala and other places.

Finishing our inspection we were returning to the veranda by another side, when we heard a childish voice: "*Chee, asatthe* (Fie, you creature!)". We could see no children around, and, therefore, peeped to find out the source of the voice. We observed movement among the leaves of the brinjal, lady's finger and other plants in the kitchen-garden near the veranda. Looking more intently, we

saw a small goat, a little monkey and a squirrel — and Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi! Bhagavan was sitting on his haunches with his legs folded up to his breast. The goat nestled between his knees; the monkey had its head resting on his right knee; the squirrel was perched on his left knee. Holding a packet of paper in his left palm, Bhagavan picked groundnuts from it with his right-hand fingers, one by one, and fed the goat, the monkey and the squirrel, and himself, by turns. His remarks appeared to have been addressed to the monkey which had tried to snatch the nut he was going to place between the squirrel's lips. As we watched, the four companions went on enjoying the eating. All four seemed to be equally happy; the way they looked at one another and kept close together was



touching. The goat, the monkey, the squirrel, and Bhagavan, had obviously forgotten their differences in species! And we too, looking on, saw all the four only as good friends despite the differences in their forms. No words could describe the feelings which passed through my being at the sight. The vision of the Transcendent appeared as a flash of lightning, and revealed to me the essence of being, awareness and bliss, *sat-chit-ananda*.

The nuts were over. Bhagavan threw the paper away, and said : “ *Ponkoda !* (go away, you fellows !)”, just as any old man speaking to his grandchildren. The goat, the monkey and the squirrel left. Bhagavan made to get up. Sri Parthasarathi and I hurried away, feeling guilty of trespass into the Divine — but not sorry.

Soon after Sri Parthasarathi and I had resumed our seats in the veranda, Bhagavan came to his couch. I cannot say he looked at us. He stood facing us, his eyes fixed on something far above and beyond anything on earth. They were like screens which shut the material world off from the light which was burning behind them. Sparks of light shot out through the fibres of the screen at times, sparks which cooled the eyes on which they fell, pierced the gross coverings and lighted the wick inside them.

Bhagavan reclined on the pillows in the couch, supporting his head on his left palm. We all sat down to look at his face. We sat and sat, and looked and looked. No one spoke or made any noise. But the confrontation was not a dead silence ; it was a very live experience in which the innermost being of each one of us communed with the Supreme Consciousness which was Bhagavan.

I was numb with the appalling realisation that the Glory was the same that dwelt in the piece of silliness which a few minutes ago I had seen eating groundnuts in the intimate company of the goat, the monkey and the squirrel. My mind kept recalling that scene ; how the goat had snuggled to Bhagavan’s breast in perfect confidence in his love for it ; how the monkey had grinned in joy and how Bhagavan had returned the grin as both bit the nut ; how the squirrel had peered with its pin-head eyes into Bhagavan’s dream-laden ones and scratched his nose tenderly with its tiny left paw. The vision of the Supreme Spirit underlying and overlaying the sense perception was spiced with the lowly sight of the groundnut party in the kitchen garden.

Bhagavan got up from the couch. We all got up. It seemed tacitly understood on all hands that we were to leave. We left. I felt a hitherto-unknown peace and joy inside me ; the faces of the others also showed a similar condition.

I saw Sri Ratilal, his host and his servant get into their bullock-cart at the Ashram gate. There was a new spring in Sri Ratilal’s movements. Bhagavan’s promise in the lad’s vision appeared to be starting fulfilment.

Many things happened since that day in my life. My material circumstances underwent changes for the worse. But my inner life was happy, always, since that day ; for I got a vision of Bhagavan very often, particularly when I was most depressed in spirits.

In 1953, I was in Rajkot, staying alone in a lodge. One day, while in the dining-hall, a man of about thirty accosted me : “ Don’t you recognise me, Sir ? ” “ No, I’m sorry ”, I replied, truthfully. The man continued : “ I am Ratilal of Gondal, Sir ! You remember the *darshan* of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, five years ago ? ” I looked at the man again. He was thin and wiry, his face aglow with health and happiness. I shook his hands heartily. He spoke again : “ Sir, Bhagavan fulfilled his promise wonderfully well. You see me. I am now managing our family business, my father taking complete rest ; I have a son two years old, and expect my wife to give me another child in a month or two.”

My mind immediately went back to the goat, the monkey and the squirrel — and Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. I could never think of Bhagavan alone !

So it has been all these years. The scene comes to my mind’s eye often. The kitchen-garden with the four friends at the groundnut party.

And, I thank Sri Ratilal and Sri Parthasarathi for guiding me to the Vision Beautiful !

Story of Prahlada¹

Translated from Sanskrit by
M. C. Subramanian

PRAHLADA continued : “Salutations to my indivisible Self ! O Gem that illumines all the worlds ! At long last I have obtained you. I have thought about you carefully. I have understood you clearly. You have manifested yourself clearly. You have been attained (i.e. realized) by me. You are as you always were. Salutations to you ! Salutations to me who am non-different from you, Lord of Lords, the auspicious Supreme Self ! I salute my Self which, like the full moon from which the clouds have moved away, has again assumed its true form on the removal of what concealed it. It abides as pure bliss, rises by itself and remains under its own control. Although it may appear seated it does not really sit ; although it may appear to go it does not really go ; although it may seem to be inactive it is active ; even when it acts it is not affected. It activates the mind as the wind stirs the leaves of a tree. It guides the senses just as a charioteer guides his horses. One should seek only the Self, think only of it and praise it alone. One can then rise above the delusion of birth and death and become free. Like a bee on a lotus it can be clearly seen (i.e. experienced) in the lotus of the heart. It can be approached freely like a dear relative. I have no longer any desire for sense-pleasures ; but I do not deliberately shun them either. Whatever comes or goes I do not mind. Till now I was deprived of my discrimination by my enemy, ignorance who assailed me in solitude. I have cut the mind down with the mind and become free from the ego-sense. I have got rid of all false notions with the help of true knowledge. I now abide in my true state. My body exists in the pure and unchanging Self which is devoid of concepts, ego-sense, mind and desires. Breaking through the strings of

desires which had kept it tied, the ego bird, has flown away from the cage of my body. I do not know where it has gone. If one is not infatuated even one's valuable possessions are as good as non-existent just as the beauty of a woman is non-existent for a blind man.

“Hail ! Thou (i.e. the Self) who art of a terrible aspect ! Hail ! Thou who art the lover of peace ! Hail ! Thou who art above all scriptures ! Hail ! Thou who art the basis of all scriptures ! Hail ! Thou who art injured ! Hail ! Thou who art not injured ! Hail ! Thou who doth exist ! Hail ! Thou who dost not exist ! Hail ! Thou who canst be conquered ! Hail ! Thou who cannot be conquered !”

Prahlada, the slayer of his foes, then entered into the state of conceptless and blissful samadhi. For five thousand years he remained in samadhi motionless like a figure in a picture. His kingdom fell into anarchy. The law of the fishes (i.e. the law of the jungle) prevailed. Then Vishnu who lies on the couch formed by the serpent Sesha in the Ocean of Milk, who is like the Sun to the lotus of the three worlds, and whose duty it is to preserve order all over the world, thought : “Prahlada is immersed in the Self. The kingdom of Patala has become rulerless. Creation has ceased to be complete because there are no more Asuras. In the absence of Asuras the Devas have no opportunity to overcome anybody. They will become lovers of peace and attain Liberation. When they attain Liberation religious rites like sacrifices and austerities will become purposeless and soon

¹ Continued from the last issue.

come to an end. When they come to an end the world will come to an end and the problem of samsara will no longer exist. Then, in this world devoid of the Sun, the Moon and the stars, I will attain the state of quietude and remain in that state. It is not good that the world should come to an untimely end in this manner. Let the Asuras therefore flourish. When they flourish the Devas will become active. Then there will be sacrifices and austerities and samsara will begin to function again. Prahlada should remain in his body till the end of the present *kalpa* (aeon). This is my dispensation."

With this decision the Supreme Lord left the Ocean of Milk and came to the city of Prahlada and entered his palace. He was riding on Garuda (the celestial bird carrying him) with Lakshmi (his consort) beside him waving the chamara (fly-whisk). He was accompanied by armed followers and divine sages praising him. He said to Prahlada, "O Great Soul! Awake" and blew his conch so loudly that the quarters reverberated with the sound. On hearing the sound produced by the life-breath of Vishnu, Prahlada slowly woke up. His life-forces rose from the *Brahmarandhra*¹ and slowly pervaded all the *nadis* (nerves) of his body. When they entered the senses through their openings his mind was reflected in the mirror of the inner life-force and became directed towards the objects of perception. The mind directed to the objects of perception assumed the form of the objects just as a face reflected in a mirror looks like a second face. When the mind began to rise the eyes also began to open like a blue lotus. When consciousness spread over the *nadis* through the openings by the operation of Prana and Apana (the upward and downward currents) they began to stir like a lotus in the wind. In a moment the mind became active, the eyes opened and the body began to function.

When Prahlada's eyes opened and his mind became active Vishnu spoke to him even as the rain-clouds speak to the peacocks (i.e. with thunder). He said: "O Good Soul! Remember your greatness and your body. Why do you discard it before its proper time in this

manner? You have no longer any idea of accepting or rejecting anything. How are you then affected by the likes and dislikes of the body? Rise up from samadhi and remain with this body till the end of the present *kalpa*. Live unperturbed in your kingdom as a liberated soul. O Good Soul! The twelve suns have not risen, the mountains have not sunk into the earth and the world is not in conflagration!² Why then do you wish to discard your body? Death will be welcome only to one who thinks "I am emaciated, I am miserable, I am stupid". It will be attractive to one whose mind is pulled hither and thither by the strings of desire. He who has no ego-sense, whose mind is not disturbed by anything and to whom all beings are alike, lives a glorious life. He who is calm, who is free from attachment and hatred and who looks at the world like a spectator, lives a glorious life. He who knows his real nature, who neither accepts nor rejects anything and whose mind is steady within itself lives a glorious life. The peace of mind which follows the cessation of all concepts of perceiver and perceived is called Liberation (moksha). Therefore, O King of the Asuras, arise and ascend your throne. I shall crown you myself. Let the Siddhas, Sadhyas and Devas who have assembled here bless you".

Having said so Vishnu gave Prahlada the consecrated bath with the sacred waters brought from the oceans of milk, etc. and rivers like the Ganges. After crowning Prahlada amidst the acclamations of the Devas and Asuras Vishnu said to him, "O Sinless one! Reign over as king as long as the earth, Mount Meru and the Sun and the Moon endure. Your virtues will be praised by all". Having spoken thus the lotus-eyed God disappeared like a second Siva along with the Devas, Kinnaras and human beings who had accompanied him.

¹ An aperture on the crown of the head through which the soul is said to escape when it leaves the body.

² These events are supposed to occur when the world comes to an end.

Rama asked Vasishtha : How did the sound of Vishnu's conch awake the noble Prahlada whose mind had been transformed into the Supreme Being ?

Vasishtha replied : "The pure tendencies of those who are liberated even while alive dwell in their hearts like roasted seeds which

do not sprout. They are pure and full of bliss as they are the products of pure *sattva* (knowledge) and pertain to the Self only. They remain in liberated persons just as they do in deep sleep. Even after a gap of a thousand years they come to life and grow big provided there is a body".

(To be continued)

CONTROL OF THE MIND

"Other than inquiry, there are no adequate means for mind-control. If through other means it is attempted, the mind will appear to be controlled, but will again rise up. Through the control of breath also, the mind will become quiescent, but only so long as the breath remains controlled ; and with the movement of breath, the mind also will start moving and will wander as impelled by residual impressions. The source is the same for both mind and breath. Thought, indeed, is the nature of the mind. The thought 'I' is the first thought of the mind ; and that is egoity. It is from that whence egoity originates that breath also originates. Therefore, when the mind becomes quiescent, the breath is controlled, and when the breath is controlled, the mind becomes quiescent. But in deep sleep, although the mind becomes quiescent, the breath does not stop. This is because of the will of God, so that the body may be preserved and others may not take it as dead. In the state of waking and in *samadhi*, when the mind becomes quiescent the breath is also so. Breath is the gross form of mind. Till the time of death, the mind keeps the breath in the body ; and when the body dies the mind takes the breath (*prana*) along with it. Therefore, breath-control is only an aid for mind-control (*manonigraha*) ; it will not bring about annihilation of the mind (*manonasa*). Like breath-control, meditation on some form of God, repetition of *mantras*, diet-regulation, etc., are but aids for rendering the mind quiescent for the time-being."

— Sri Bhagavan in *WHO AM I?*

INDIAN ART

By

Dr. C. Satyanarayana



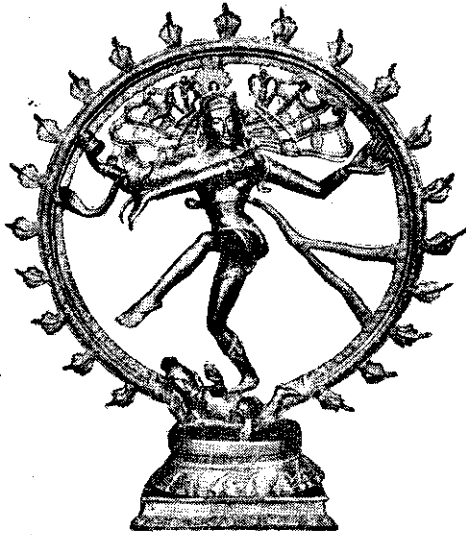
HOW wonderfully has the Indian artist created this picture, the carving of Vishnu, reposing on the thousand-headed Ananta (symbolising Eternity)! Seshasayana, brings out the essence of Indian Art. Vishnu, who protects and governs the universe, reposes on the thousand-headed 'Sesha' serpent-king. Sesha is floating on the placid ocean whose waters are as radiant as the thin, shining clouds of autumn. The four-headed Brahma, the God of creation, is seated on a lotus flower that has sprouted from the navel of Vishnu; Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, who symbolizes beauty and prosperity, sits at the feet of her Lord Vishnu in peaceful radiance. Vishnu is in a happy peaceful repose, 'Yoga Nidra'.

What is the meaning of this scene? In Indian philosophy the word *Sesha* connotes what remains or what is left behind. The thousand-headed snake, Sesha, connotes combination of a number of small things, the complete or whole universe. Everything in the universe is created for the *Purusba*, and this creation, that which is left over, is the inevitable complement of *Purusba*. The thousand-heads of the snake represent the division of

the infinite universe into innumerable multiples, each one complete and finite in itself and yet all together forming the infinite. Vishnu and Lakshmi, Man and Woman, a finite pair and creative power in the infinite universe, representing the activity of the Universe creating within itself, developing within itself and ending within itself. The lotus indicates progress, evolution and creation. Lakshmi the goddess stands for beauty and abundance. This again represents nature (*prakriti*). The Hindu sculptor has shown here his artistic skill, presenting in a fine and delicately beautiful manner his knowledge of philosophy and his ideals of beauty concepts. However materially one looks at his work, one is bound to be struck by the message he wants to convey and his spiritual concepts.

Let us now examine a representation in bronze. This is the cosmic dance of Shiva, illustrating *Panchakritya*, his five-fold function. Shiva is represented here as the embodiment and manifestation of eternal energy in five activities. Shiva is known as Nataraja, the king of dancers, as *Nritya Murti* — dancing God — Cosmic Dancer. This artistic representation takes us to the height of emotional delight. The God is dancing on the dwarfish body of the demon of forgetfulness (*apasmāra*) who represents ignorance. The destruction of ignorance brings enlightenment, release from the bondage of phenomenal existence. The Hindu artist created this not for a drawing-room display, but for worship. The five activities are: (i) creation (*srishti*), forming and unfolding; (ii) maintenance, duration (*stbhti*); (iii) destruction or withdrawing (*sambāra*); (iv) concealing or veiling the reality behind the garb of appearance (*tirobhāva*); and (v) compassion, bestowing grace, through a manifestation that accepts the devotee (*anugraha*). In the Hindu

pantheon, these functions are severally performed respectively by Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva.



Sri Nataraja

All these are found together in the vision that is vouchsafed to us in the cosmic dance of Nataraja. The drum in his hand represents creation; the *abhaya hasta* or 'fear not' gesture of the hand, represents protection (*stbitti*); the flame in the hand signifies destruction; the lifted leg represents the release of the soul and the hand down-pointing represents bestowing grace on the devotee. The ring of fire all round the figure, the *Prabha mandala*, represents the eternal dance of Nature or *Prakriti*, which is the life process of the universe and its creatures, within which there is taking place unceasingly the eternal dance of the prime mover, the Lord God. Such is the meaning of Nataraja.

Let us state here the *Puranic* story behind this. In the Daruka forest some haughty ritualists were performing *yagnās* strictly according to sacrificial rites. Shiva came down to put down their pride; Vishnu came with him in the shape of a beautiful maiden and Adishesha followed. The ritualists set upon god Shiva a tiger, which they had created by their magic spell. He tore it with the nail of his little finger and wore the skin round his

waist. Then those haughty men, undismayed by the destruction of the tiger, created a fearful serpent and sent it against Shiva. Shiva just seized it and wreathed it round the neck like a flower garland. Then the King of dancers began to dance, radiating happiness all around him. Those misled persons again set up a monstrous looking malignant dwarf, Mujjalaka, the personification of ignorance. As he danced on and on, in the course of the dance itself Nataraja pressed the tip of his toe on the dwarf. The dwarf's spine gave way, he utterly broke and writhed in agony. Shiva danced on. He displayed '*lasya*' (harmony), showing perfect happiness. Then he did the *Tandava* (dance) of gestures in various poses. He danced on and on. The Gods and others there witnessed his happy dance. All the worlds, quaked and shook. The *Devas* and *Kinnaras* worshipped Him with devotion (*bhakti*). Adishesha, the thousand-headed snake, also worshipped Him. This is the dance of Nataraja.

In the Ellora caves one can see a different representation of Nataraja. This is the evening dance — *Sandhya Nritya* of Shiva.

Placing *Ādi Shakti*, Mother of the Universe, on a golden throne studded with precious gems, *Kailasanātha* (Shiva) armed with a *shūla* (a spearlike weapon) is dancing on the heights of Kailasa Peak, while the minor gods (*devatās*) gather round him and sing. Saraswati plays on the *Veena*, Indra on the flute, Brahma keeps tune with cymbals, Lakshmi sings, and Vishnu plays on the drum. *Gandharvas*, *Yakshas*, *Pathagas*, *Uragas*, *Siddhas*, *Sadhyas*, *Vidyadbaras*, *Apsaras*, and all the beings of the three worlds gather together there to witness the celestial dance in that great arena (*mabāranga*) and to hear the music of the spheres. This is the divine song. This is the universal and celestial experience (*Viswanubbuti*). Should we not regard the Indian artist who has portrayed such ideas in his sculpture and painting as a yogi, one with a spiritual intent? And are not these sculptures and paintings the means by which he attains spiritual salvation (*moksba*)?

Let us look at another artistic creation — the image of the Buddha. What was the source



The Buddha

of this image of the Buddha for the artist? The inspiration for it came from the image of *Mahayogi*. The connection of *Adi Yogi*, the original Yogi, immersed in meditation, is at the back of the artist's mind as he creates the image of the Buddha. The whole spirit of Indian thought is symbolized in the conception of the Buddha, sitting on his Lotus Throne, calm, impassive, both mind and body raised above all strife yet filled with more than human power, derived from perfect communion with the source of all truth, all knowledge, and all strength. It is the antithesis of the crude ideal of physical strength and energy; it is the symbol of the power of the spirit which comes, not by striving, but as the gift of God, in prayer and meditation, in Yoga, union with the Universal spirit.

In the *Sukranitisara*, a work on art, it is laid down that the artist must conceive the form of the image through intense meditation on its inner spirit. Only then can be created a

true and complete picture. The image of the object will not by itself convey its true, inner characteristics. Ananda Coomaraswamy conveys this by a quotation from *Sri Khasarpanadokeswara Sadhana* which says that the artist, before he creates a thing, must be in Samadhi like a Yogi. *Samadhi* is a state of release, a repose unaffected by external factors; he must meditate on the thing that he seeks to create, free from all extraneous thought. Then his mind will be immaculate, uninfluenced by any other thought, calm and serene. At that moment, he will conceive with the help of this concentrated vision, the form of the object he is going to portray, as well as the symbolic representation by hand of *mudras* and the colours in which to paint them. The rest of the artist's duty is to transpose this mental image to the medium on which it is to be portrayed, a canvas, a stone, or a piece of wood or metal. This is Yoga, the observance of which makes the artist a seeker after Truth. This is the ideal of the Indian artist.

Patanjali says that the mental state which becomes in form and character identical with the object of meditation is called *Samadhi*. In the state of *Samadhi* the mind does not flicker, nor does it wander, flitting from one object to another, but is steady in contemplation. No other thought but that of the object of meditation is present in the mind at that time. It is only a perfect artist, well-trained in the powers of observation and well-versed in correctly reproducing mental images in the language of art, who can represent the vision, the spiritual essence of art, through stone, colour and line. The *Silparatna* says that not only the visual images are to be stored and utilized in the creation of art, but even sound images, rhythms and tones may be stored in memory and transformed into visual images by a process of deep contemplation. It is in this way that Indian artists represented, in the visual forms of deities, the various kinds of musical tones and symphonies.

VISION

By Burton Lowe

The blind girl
Draws to herself
The eyes of all around
The guides speak to her of it

One — They're staring. Morbid fascination with your blindness compels them to, though they'd rather not look at you. They're captivated by the monstrous, the grotesque. But never mind. Each of them has his own deformity, whether you can see it or not.

The Other — They can't help looking at you. You've a beauty of face and body, a grace and suppleness of spirit that delights them. The tenderness they discover in themselves pleases them. Seeing your artless smile, despite the weight you carry, they feel themselves disburdened.

At city's edge
Her eyes reflect
The lake as twins
But behind the mirrors
There is no image
The guides fashion images of words

One — The lake is covered by a smoky gray film, a cataract of human wastes. Fish lie dead on the shore, suffocated and putrefying.

The Other — A stone thrown into the water breaks the film: the green-black pupil of the lake dilates, following the ripples. Trout flash through, and silver, flex in the air.

She knows only black
She knows nothing of black
Black oak silhouette
Against the white sky
Visions essence contrast

The guides would provide her with that

One — That tree has many tales to tell. Those rotted tree house boards: a man limps because a boy fell. Those initials carved in its bark: she died soon after, he lives a death

of grief. That knot of rope on a high branch: relic of a hanging.

The Other — That tree has many tales to tell. Those rotted tree house boards: a man smiles to daydream of a boy who daydreamed there. Those initials carved in its bark: his flowers there, not at her grave, grief dead of love. That knot of rope on a high branch: relic of a child's swing.

Mist turns to rain
The girl knows something of rain
Its smell
Its taste upon her tongue
Its feel upon her skin
Its all enclosing sound
She asks the guides to tell her of the rain

One — More rain and more to come. The smell of storms, the taste of drowning, the feel of sickness, the sound of death and mourning.

The Other — More rain and more to come. The smell of spring, the taste of sustenance, the feel of vigor, the sound of life and celebration.

The girl knows something of rain
Its smell
Its taste upon her tongue
Its feel upon her skin
Its all enclosing sound

And now knows something of vision
Its voice
Its images of words
Its endless memories
Its all pervading strife

She leaves the guides
With a parting smile
Which each will add to his vision
One will call it demoniacal
The other will call it divine
But both alike sense a chill
And shudder

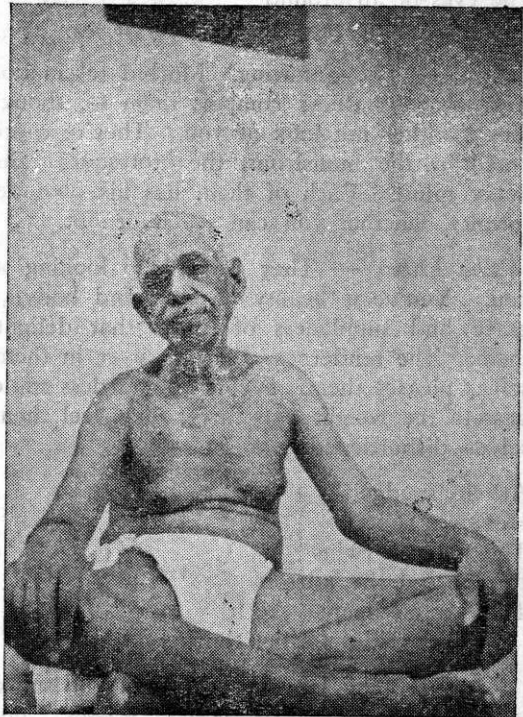
A Deferred Pilgrimage

By
R. Hari Rao

ON my part a pilgrimage to Sri Ramanasramam had long been overdue. It ought to have been made even during Maharshi's lifetime, but somehow or other luck did not favour me till February 28, 1972. On that day a crowded bus from Madras dropped me at Tiruvannamalai in the hot noon, and a none-too-comfortable jutka ride took me to the Ashram. Being a perfect stranger to the place, I wondered whether it would be possible to secure an independent room all for myself. With diffidence, I approached Sri Venkataraman, Ashram President with my request. Not only did he readily oblige me, but sent a servant also to show me the room assigned and open it for me. Throwing down my small luggage, I moved out and, after a wash and a cup of coffee in the dining hall, I made a round of the Ashram.

Not far from the small town, lies the Ashram in sylvan surroundings, dominated by the holy hill of Arunachala, said to be an embodiment of Siva Himself. The Ashram is situated on a small estate, lovely with its cocoanut palms and other trees and flower-plants. True to the Japanese saying, "in the humdrum of the market there is money ; but under the cherry tree there is rest", here is found rest for the mind and perfect silence. Lovely peacocks strut about, breaking the silence with their shrill cry.

The entire Ashram is hallowed ground, but there are some spots more especially so, the Auditorium, the old Meditation Hall and the small room where Bhagavan attained *Mahanirvana*. The first is an impressive, large hall built over the mortal remains of Bhagavan. Here, "Holy Time is quiet as a nun breathless with adoration". From the full-size pictures of Him adorning the hall, the searching gaze of His lustrous eyes penetrates



your heart through and through. In silence visitors and devotees stand here when *puja* is performed.

The small room in which Bhagavan passed away contains the few articles used by Him during His earthly pilgrimage — the *kamandalu* (waterpot), the eating bowl, the sofa on which He reclined. His walking sticks and the few books that He used. These are all carefully preserved. A tiny oil-lamp burns all day, without a flicker. Here also are several paintings of Him and His wooden sandals are daily covered with lovely flowers. A small clock stands still, without ticking anymore, showing the exact time of His *Mahanirvana*.

Another interesting spot lies a few feet north of Bhagavan's Hall where the cow,

Lakshmi, is buried, as well as a dog, deer and crow, showing Bhagavan's tenderness for animals and birds and indeed for all life.

While I sat in the Auditorium one day, it struck me that He was in complete accord with the author of the *Mandukya Upanishad* and *Gaudapada*. According to these, *Brahman-Atman* alone is the one Reality and the phenomenal world only an appearance. They assert also that there has been no creation at all. For at the back of any activity there must be an urge impelling one to action; but how can Brahman have any urge, He being the embodiment of perfection! Any urge on His part would impair His perfection and He would no longer be Brahman. Thus it is said that there has been no creation, no dissolution, no individual soul, none in bondage, no aspirant, no one desiring to attain liberation and none liberated.

Though Sankara too maintains that *Brahman-Atman* alone is real, and the phenomenal world unreal, he draws a distinction between Absolute Reality (*Pāramārtika Sattā*) and empirical or relative Reality (*Vyāvahārika Sattā*). The world is not false like a barren woman's son, the horns of a hare or a sky-lotus. Just as a dream appears to be real during the dream-state, so also the world appears to be real until it is transcended in the state of *turiya* or *samadhi* — when it disappears and Brahman alone remains. Sankara concedes empirical reality to the phenomenal world, while the *Mandukya Upanishad* and *Gaudapada* do not. According to them the world is absolutely unreal; it is only an appearance.

Now what has Maharshi to say? In the booklet, *Who Am I?*, in answer to the question: "Is not everything the work of God?"

Bhagavan replied: "God has no *sankalpa* (resolve). No karma attaches itself to Him".

Again in reply to the question: "What is the nature of the Self?" he said: "What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul and God are appearances on it like silver on the mother-of-pearl; these three appear simultaneously and disappear the same way" (p. 8). Replying to a third question, when will the world disappear, he said: "When the mind which is the cause of all cognitions and of all actions becomes quiescent the world will disappear" (p. 3).

In another booklet, *Self-Enquiry*, we are told: "*There is no doubt whatsoever that the universe is a mere illusion.* (italics mine). The principal purpose of the Veda is to make known the Reality, Brahman, *after showing the apparent universe to be false.* (italics mine). It is for this purpose that the Vedas admit the creation of the world and not for any other reason."

In the same booklet he observes: "The six mystic centres which are said to be the *loci* of meditation, are but products of the mind. With reference to meditation on the six centres, the Siva-Yogins say, 'God who is of the nature of the non-dual, plenary, consciousness-Self, manifests, sustains and resolves us all. It is a great error to attribute names and forms and locate Him here and there.' The Vedantins declare, 'All these are but projections of the mind.'" (p. 28)

Elsewhere Bhagavan says: "You do not proceed from duality to non-duality". For according to him, the earnest seeker of Truth is to proceed with *Self-Enquiry — Who Am I?* Here is no personal God to meditate upon; no duality to begin your sadhana with, because Brahman-Atman alone exists".

Work is Worship

By
G. Chandra

WORK will be tantamount to worship if the work is dedicated to the Lord as service to Him. This view is adopted by people who are inclined towards *Bhakti Marga* (path of devotion). But those who have studied the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi will be inclined to view the 'doer of the work' as not the person himself but the Lord — the absolute Self; the work performed by people of this category is also equivalent to worship.

This raises a question — "What is the value of the work done by people who neither dedicate their work unto the Lord nor feel that the real doer is the Self?" The answer is that this type of work is also worship to some degree. When work is being done, the mind is diverted from impure thoughts and this leads to purification. This in turn will make the person fit to receive divine grace at the appropriate time. Hence work performed by such people is also to be treated as worship.

One of the vital teachings of Bhagavan Krishna is to renounce the fruits of action. Then the action becomes pure and a form of worship. Hence it is established that "nishkama karma" (dispassionate activity) is nothing less than worship, if not more.

Bhagavan Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita has taught not the renunciation of work, but the renunciation of the fruits. When Arjuna was hesitating to fight in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Krishna taught him the lesson of disinterestedly doing one's allotted work in life.

The routine of life of Bhagavan Ramana also taught the lesson of "Work is worship". Bhagavan, who was a world teacher, used to get up before 4 a.m. and spend some time in the kitchen cutting vegetables, thus imparting spiritual teaching in an informal way to the devotees working there.

When he used to leave the kitchen to go to the meditation hall to give darsan to his devotees, he would jokingly say: "I am going to do my work". Somebody asked: "What work was Bhagavan doing sitting silently?" It is difficult to reply to such people. The work which such Sages perform is intangible and immeasurable.

They in fact exercise a tremendous spiritual influence on those around them. I put this question to Shree Anandamayee Ma at holy Prayag during 1958 and she said, "Like trees, such sages give shade to people and fruit to eat".

Let us learn from saints the lesson of work. Their every breath is dedicated to the benefit of humanity.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva also taught the lesson of work. Before his advent, the general belief was that a sannyasi should do bhajan and meditation and go about begging his food. Shri Ramakrishna taught his disciples to serve the people for everyone was an image of God. Thus he taught the lesson of "Work is worship" to the sannyasis of India.

If we keep in mind the words of Bhagavan Krishna, contained in verse 7 of chapter VIII of the Gita, that we should remember the Lord at all times, we can be sure of spiritual development even while performing worldly duties.

Some people think that worship of the Lord is superior to the performance of one's duties; that they should do puja and offer prayers even at the cost of work. On this question I consulted a saint staying at the Gita Batika, Gorakhpur. His unequivocal reply was: "Worship at the cost of one's work is not acceptable to the Lord."

Glory of Arunachala

Arunachala Mahatmyam

Translated from Tamil by
M. C. Subramanian

PART II

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS ACTS PERFORMED WITH MOTIVES

Nandikesvara said (to Markandeya) :

IF one worships the Lord of Aruna with red flowers on Sundays he will attain material prosperity and sovereignty. He who worships with the flowers of Kasturi Pachai on Mondays will attain the *Satyaloka*. The effect of worshipping the Lord with white lotus on Thursdays (Tuesdays and Wednesdays are not mentioned), is attainment of *Janaloka*, on Fridays with champaka and jasmine flowers *Tapoloka* and on Saturdays with *jati* flowers release from *Yamaloka* for even sinners.

If one offers (to the Lord) *pāyasa* (rice cooked with milk and sugar) on *Prathama* (the first day of the moon) one will acquire wealth and grains in plenty. The offer of cooked rice and curds on *dvitia* (the second day of the moon) will make one fortunate and eminent. He will perform a sacrifice (*lit.* drink soma juice, *somapa*). If one offers *vadai* (a small circular fried cake made of blackgram) on *Tritiya* (the third day of the moon) one will be healthy and free from disease. If it is offered on *Chaturthi* (the fourth day of the moon) one will obtain grains in plenty and one's desires will be fulfilled. *Ven Pongal* (a preparation of rice, pulse, etc.) offered on *Panchami* (the fifth day of the moon) results in continued prosperity. *Sarkarai Pongal* (a preparation of rice cooked with brown sugar etc.) offered on *Shashthi* (the sixth day of the moon) is rewarded with the birth of sons. If

one offers *Ellannam* (cooked rice flavoured with sesame) on *Saptami* (the seventh day of the moon) one will, even if he is poor become free from debts easily. The offer of *rajasali chennel anna* (rice of a superior variety) on *Ashtami* (the eighth day of the moon) gives one influence over kings even without serving them. The offer of a wheat dish on *Navami* (the ninth day of the moon) makes one free from consumption. *Kadambam* (rice cooked with vegetables) offered on *Dasami* (the tenth day of the moon) leads to increased happiness in all the worlds at all times. *Aval* (beaten rice) offered on *Ekadasi* (the eleventh day of the moon) makes one fearless everywhere. If cooked rice and pulses are offered on *Dwadasi* (the twelfth day of the moon) one's desires get fulfilled. *Sattumavu* (rice flour mixed with brown sugar) offered on *Trayodasi* (the thirteenth day of the moon) makes one free from sorrow and gives peace of mind. By offering various kinds of fruits on *Chaturdasi* (the fourteenth day of the moon) even a man of dull intellect becomes learned. The offer of jack-fruit on *Purnami* (the full-moon day) heals eye-diseases. The offer of edible roots and tubers on *Amavasya* (the new-moon day) is pleasing to the spirits of one's ancestors (*pitrs*).

Clothes should be offered (to the Lord) with devotion on the asterism of *Asvini*, ornaments on *Bharani*; lighted lamps on *Krittika*; silver on *Robini*; sandal paste on *Mrigasirsha*; hari chandana (a special kind of sandal paste) on *Arudra*; civet on *Punarvasu*; scented camphor on *Pushya*; saffron on *Aslesha*; water of the Ganga on *Makha*; betel leaves and arcanuts on *Purva Phalgun*; incense on *Uttara Phalgun*; agaru (agallochum) on *Hasta*; scented sandal paste on *Chitra*;

fragrant vrinda flowers on *Svati* ; fly whisks on *Visakha* ; a white umbrella on *Anuradha* ; cows on *Jyeshtha* ; strings of pearls on *Mūla* ; a crown on *Purva Ashada* ; jewels on *Uttara Ashada* ; a pedestal on *Sravana* ; gold on *Sravishta* ; clothes on *Satabhisag* ; various object of luxury on *Purva Bhadrapada* ; horses on *Uttara Bhadrapada* ; a golden chariot on *Revati*. These should be offered after first worshipping the Lord of Arunachala elaborately (*mabā puja*). On the days on which the sun enters Aries and the other signs of the zodiac, *Panchāmrita* (five sweet ingredients made into a semi-liquid paste) should be poured (over the Lord) morning and evening. Camomile *Maruthonri*, *nohil*, *kadambam*, *veppilai*, *padiri* (all flowers), jasmine, lotus, sweet marjoram, nandiyavattai and water lily should then be offered chanting *Panchakshara* (five letters, i.e. *Namab Sivāya*) all the times. On the days of winter and summer solstices *panchagaavya* should be poured (on the linga) while chanting *Shadakshara* (six letters, i.e. *Om Namab Sivāya*) ; and milk to the accompaniment of *Pranava* (i.e., OM). Afterwards the Lord should be adorned with *rudra tulasi* in the morning *mālaka* at noon and jasmine in the evening.

At the time of Ardhodaya (rising of the half moon) a thousand pots of pure water should be poured (over the linga) while chanting the *Sata Rudra Stotra*. Aspirants for Liberation should keep vigil on Sivaratri. They should on that day worship the Lord of Aruna with the tripartite leaves of the bilva tree and lotus to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals and singing and dancing.

In the month of Pushya the Agneya festival should be celebrated along with chanting the *vyabritis* (primal sounds, namely, *bhūb*, *bbu-vab*, *svab*) and the offer of rice and vegetable dishes. In the month of Vaisaka the Damanaka festival should be celebrated according to the

Agamas of Siva. In the month of Margasira there should be ceremonial awakening (of the Lord) in the morning with the chanting of Sama Veda and the Lord should be worshipped elaborately with devotion. On Saturdays, the evenings of *Trayodasi* (the thirteenth day of the moon), the Arudra Vyatipata (a sacred day), the Parvas (days of eclipse) and Sundays and Mondays there should be worship according to the Agamas.

A wise man will worship the Lord of Arunachala on occasions like *dāksba* (consecration for a religious ceremony), *upanayana*. (the ceremonial wearing of the sacred thread), marriage and the birth of a son. The Lord of Aruna should be worshipped with flowers when religious vows are observed, or when buildings are constructed or when one suddenly comes into a fortune or when one is going to attack an enemy. If one is at a great distance (from Aruna) one should think of it, if near one should look at it ; if living inside the temple one should worship the Lord morning, noon and evening.

Child ! What more do you want ? There is none like Aruna for enabling one to attain Heaven and Liberation. The mind becomes pure by thinking of Aruna, the ears by hearing, the eyes by seeing and the tongue by uttering the Name. Those who are born at Aruna enjoy all happiness while alive and attain Liberation after death. If *srāddha* (a ceremony to propitiate the manes) is performed here for those who die at other places, they too will attain Liberation even if they had sinned. Aruna is superior to the Seven Centres of Liberation : Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kanchi, Kasi, Avantika and Dvaraka.

On hearing all this Markandeya said to Nandikesvara : I request you kindly to tell me more about the greatness of this (Arunachala).

BOOK REVIEWS

BHUTAN : LAND OF THE PEACEFUL DRAGON : By G. N. Mehra. (XVI + 151 text pages and 93 colour photographs. 16 black-and-white photographs within the text). Pub. : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Kanpur, 1974. Price : Rs. 150.00.

In this time of violent changes, upheavals, environment pollution and general unrest all over the world, it comes as a relief to be introduced to a country, in which life is still in harmony with nature, religion still a source of culture and human happiness, and the rulers still in personal touch with their people. In fact, it was the late King of Bhutan who inspired this book and to whom it is, therefore, dedicated by the author.

Mr. Mehra, who in his capacity as Financial Adviser to the Government of Bhutan, lived for many years in this country and had access to many places and sources of information which are inaccessible to most other visitors of Bhutan, is in the lucky position to give to the world a unique insight into the life and nature of one of the last "Shangrilas" of the world. And he does so not only by giving us a detailed account of the land and its people, of art and architecture, religious tradition and early history as well as the present administration and general economy of the country, but supports his description with magnificent full-page colour photos which in themselves would make this volume the pride of any library, both from an artistic as well as from a documentary and historical point of view. In these pictures we admire the majesty of the mountains, the loveliness of the valleys, the monumentality of architecture, the lovable character of the people and the uniqueness of their religious art, in form of paintings and ritual dances, interiors of temples adorned with frescoes, statues, richly carved altars and precious offerings. Without these pictures, which are a credit to the photographic skill and artistic sensitivity of the author, nobody could imagine the vital importance of colour in religious tradition as well as in the daily life of the people of Bhutan. The high standard of the colour reproductions does full justice to the excellence of the originals and corresponds to the high quality of the descriptive text, in which the author shows himself as a reliable guide to the understanding of the ancient culture and the present conditions of Bhutan. He writes with

warmth and conviction, based on keen observation and practical knowledge of both, the common people and the administration of the country.

His book is all the more interesting as it depicts a country in transition from a medieval, more or less feudal society, to a modern state, under the courageous leadership of its late King Jigme Dorje Wangchuck, who tried to guide his people into the new age, without destroying the essential values of his country's ancient culture.

Here we have a fascinating example of an enlightened monarch, who had the farsightedness to divest himself voluntarily of his absolute powers, in order to share them with his people. The measure of his success may be gauged from the balanced account of this book which deals as much with the present problems and achievements as with the still living traditions of the past and the outstanding beauty of Bhutanese art. "The modern world", the author says, "with its penchant for materialistic values . . . might consider the creation of such 'useless' beauty a puerile and wasteful effort. But ultimately the call of the spirit is what matters or should matter and by giving dynamic visual expression to their vast mythology, the Bhutanese artists have not only accomplished a difficult task but have created a lasting symbol of the triumph of their faith. This has fed the country's soul and made it possible for Bhutan to maintain its identity and not to be swallowed by the culture of its big neighbours."

This book will take its place as a historical document of the transitional period of Bhutan as well as of its living art and tradition, and as such I warmly recommend it to all who are interested in the unique culture of this beautiful country.

LA MA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE MIND. OUTSIDE THE TEACHING-1 : By Lu K'uan Yu. Pub. : Rider and Company, 3, Fitzroy Square, London-W-1, England. Pp. 191. Price : Cased £ 3.50, Midway £ 2.50.

It was indeed an excellent idea on the part of Lu K'uan Yu to translate and make available to the general public the Chinese collection of the biographies and sayings or teachings of the early Ch'an Masters up to the sixth generation after Hui

Neng. This is the first of the proposed ten-volume series and is self-contained as will be the following ones.

Ch'an Masters used their own methods to awaken the latent potentialities of their disciples and to make Zen votaries understand the living meaning of the Mind Dharma. Of particular interest are the apt and lively anecdotes and examples of a shortcut to Enlightenment called 'Direct entry with a sharp chopper', which many masters used.

The preface contains letters to the author with detailed accounts of the experiences of *satori* of two English and one New Zealand *upasakas* in their initial successes on the Ch'an path. These accounts are included to clear the prevailing fallacy that this path cannot be followed successfully in the West. It is a great encouragement and joy to read of such experiences and these letters form an inspiring introduction to the main subject matter.

Though the ability to predict the future is a normal outcome of the Ch'an and Mahayana training and is included in the Ten Powers of a Buddha still it is somewhat of a surprise to come across a statement in the preface that 'One must acquire all the ten powers before one can be a full-fledged Buddha'. A normal outcome of spiritual training — yes, but to have to acquire such powers seems quite a different matter.

The footnotes which Lu K'uan Yu was reluctantly compelled to use seem to this reviewer valuable and necessary, for, unless a seeker has reached a certain degree of spiritual maturity some of the dialogues would be meaningless to him. It is impossible to describe in words what defies description, that from which 'words turn away baffled'. When revealing or rather trying to reveal the state of Suchness to enlighten their disciples Ch'an Masters devised special terms 'the language of the uncreate' which only showed the way, as is evident from the title of the book: *The Transmission of the Mind. Outside the Teaching*. "If you know that the real thing has been purposely put aside, you can use a little effort to discover it. Surely this is something that is closely associated with your own Self" said one of the Ch'an Masters, Yun Men to his disciples.

Lu K'uan Yu's very valuable publications have helped to make Zen Buddhism widely known in the West and to attract many votaries. Let us hope Lu K'uan Yu will remain with us for many more years to come and be able to translate and publish all the remaining volumes, so that as many of these invaluable Chinese Buddhist texts as possible can be

preserved at least in the West should they be fated to disappear in the East as is likely.

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF JOEL S. GOLDSMITH, MODERN MYSTIC: By Lorraine Sinkler. Pub.: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 194. Price: £ 2.95 (in U.K. only).

Lorraine Sinkler felt that this story must be told, a story of a truly spiritual man, a modern mystic who healed and influenced thousands of people and 'in whose presence one felt stirred to reach out of limitations to Infinity'. She was eminently qualified to write this story after many years of close association with Joel Goldsmith as a disciple and editor of *The Infinite Way* publications. Actually Joel Goldsmith entrusted to her the work of making his life which was bound up with the Infinite Way, known to the world. But for her tireless, masterly work of putting together and editing scattered material, many of the publications of 'The Infinite Way' would most probably never have seen the light of day.

The lengthy quotations greatly enhance the value of the book enunciating in simple words of an almost scriptural quality the many aspects of the one universal truth.

Without employing philosophical terminology or displaying knowledge of Eastern doctrines, with an occasional quotation or reference to the Bible, they culminate in proclaiming the pure doctrine of the Oneness of Being. The quotations from the Bible, pregnant biblical texts on which seekers are advised to dwell, are reminiscent of the use of *Mahavakyas* which was also one of the paths recommended by Sankaracharya.

Joel Goldsmith's work stemmed from a conscious Oneness with the Source of all life, from the Presence which guided his steps "This Spirit is my life, the harmony of my being. . . . I have not had to take human footsteps. . . ."

Many readers will find this book inspiring and of great help in their search and striving for spiritual wisdom.

LUCIA OSBORNE

THE PARAMAHAMSA OF PAWAS: By D. K. Pande. Pub.: Swami Swaroopananda Seva Mandal, Pawas, Ratnagiri. Pp. 243. Price: Rs. 12.

Maharashtra has an almost unbroken line of self-realized saints. Swami Swaroopananda, one of the most eminent modern saints of Maharashtra who cast off his mortal coil in 1974, transformed the lives of thousands of people. Though there have

been several well-known biographical works in Marathi, only one such book in English has been published before. This has served the purpose of making him known outside Maharashtra, though even before this, he had attracted foreign seekers.

The author, who is an initiated disciple of the Master has, by his grace, done his difficult job in an admirable manner. "But this is not merely a biography of Swami Swaroopananda, the Paramahansa of Pawas. It is in some measure, like the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, a compendium of Swami Swaroopananda's teachings and experiences as embodied in his books and correspondence, where the poet, the prophet and the philosopher work hand in hand in perfect harmony," as the Introduction aptly says. The book consisting of eighteen chapters (a significant number!) is well-planned, with Glossary, Notes, Bibliography and eight beautiful illustrations. One however feels the need for an Index. It is very interesting and enlightening to see how Ramachandra Godbole, an intelligent child of religious parents born and brought up at Pawas, an enchanting village in Konkan in the Ratnagiri District, with an immense urge for perfection and ardent love for his country and humanity at large, developed into Swami Swaroopananda, a Paramahansa (a realised saint) of a high order radiating 'sweetness and light'. He has thus kept unbroken the line of the *Nāth Sampradāya* originating from Adinath, i.e. Lord Siva and enriched by Jnaneshvara and other great saints.

The poetic titles of the chapters such as 'Towards the Goal', 'The Star Shines', 'Petals Open', 'A Fire Within', 'At the Feet of the Master', 'Face to Face with God', 'Showers of Bliss', 'Swami's Works' show the various landmarks in the life of the Swami. Formerly an ardent nationalist and a sincere social worker experimenting in the religious, political and social environment when India was not free, he, by his sudden and unexpected serious illness, as if by divine planning, turned into a serious sadhaka concentrating all his energy on Self-realisation, and, by the grace of the Divine Mother attained his goal. As in the case of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, out of fear and experience of death, was born in him a unitive experience of the timeless transcendental Bliss of the Divine, once for all. The rest of his life was entirely the play of the divine for the well-being of the universe more as an example than a precept, though precept was necessarily given. "The core of his teaching is," writes the author, "to maintain the spirit of a dispassioned witness (*Sākshitwa*) amongst all actions of the mundane life, to do all actions in the spirit

that one is not the doer but somebody else, in the spirit of dispassion". He exhorts us to have complete faith in the Guru and to practise '*Soham Japa*' or '*Ajapā Japa*' or follow what is called '*Manah Pavana Mārga*'. It is an effortless and automatic Sadhana, listening with devotion to the natural '*Soham*' (I am that) recitation abiding in the breath; the mind along with breath reaching the inner sky. This results in freedom of the Spirit here and now, and oblivion of the world. Though a great modern descendant of the *Nāth Sampradāya*, the Swami is above any creed or sect and welcomes every seeker with love and compassion. He has made the old path new, simple and fresh for the modern world.

The author offers brilliant pen-pictures of Swami's personality, e.g. his peaceful daily round, the vision of Lord Vishnu that he had, service to the mother and her uplift at the time of her death. Many anecdotes and reminiscences about him throw light on his multifaced personality.

We congratulate the author and the Seva Mandal for bringing out such an exhaustive life-story and philosophy of a modern sage. In the joy of reading it we ignore the author's lapsing into a few uncouth expressions especially in the early part of the book.

A book worth reading, a 'must' for every seeker!

Prof. G. V. KULKARNI

AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN RELIGIONS :

By Harbans Singh and Lal Mani Joshi. Pub. : Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala. Pp. 369. Price not mentioned.

It is to the credit of the Punjabi University to have introduced Religion as an elective subject of study at the undergraduate level. The book under review has been designed as a first course for college students and covers Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. We are promised a second volume which will deal with Zoroastrian, Christian and Muslim faiths.

The authors are bold enough to proclaim certain home-truths :

"Unlike the Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism never favoured asceticism or the monastic way of life. It encouraged living in family. Even when the ascetic stage (*sanyasa-ashrama*) was accepted by the *dharma shastras* after the model of the Buddhist and Jain *bhikshus* and *shramanas*, it was placed at the end of a man's life. It was only after Shankaracharya that the monastic way of religious life became popular. Before him the leading teachers and sages of the Hindu tradition had generally been householders."

"In Hinduism the pursuit of *artha* (material goods) and *kama* (pleasures) is given the same importance as is given to the pursuit of *dharma* (morality) and *moksha* (liberation)." Discussing *maya*, the authors say :

"It occurs in the Rig Veda in the sense of the magical power by which the gods assumed various forms. In the Upanishads, *maya* is the creative power of Brahman by which it manifested itself and brought the universe into being. The Gita tells of God as appearing in nature by His *maya* or mysterious power. The word does not mean illusion in the Gita. Later Vedanta philosophy used it in the sense of 'world illusion'. In the Gita, the world or material nature (*prakriti*) is treated as real. In the Sankhya System, the term *maya* stands for *Prakriti* or *Pradhana*, i.e. matter. The word *maya* in the sense of unreality and illusion was first used in Mahayana Buddhist philosophy."

The book is written in simple language and marked by clarity. The authors have been successful in the task they have set for themselves, to emphasize the historical development and the spiritual and moral principles of each religion. The last chapter on Sikh religion especially lends itself admirably to this set purpose.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN

ACHIEVING ORDER FROM DISORDER : A GENESIS OF HOW WE KNOW : By Walter S. Field. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 87. Price : \$ 6.

In this book the author, who we are told studied engineering and science, economics and philosophy in succession, discusses "How and what can Man know", which is only the meaning of the title of the book under review. The "given" is apparently the "disorder", the writer refers to and the "order" stands for the knowledge which one gets. The book is divided into three parts, the first dealing with man's perceiving and conceiving, the second discussing language, thinking and the several kinds of abstractions which man is capable of and the third speaks of our a priori relative thinking in which we use comparison and proportion or ratio. Classification and analogy play a very significant role here. The last part discusses "knowing", including quantitative development, fourth and fifth level influences etc.

The author begins with our biological structure, instincts, nervous system and brain and gradually proceeds to discuss our quantitative basis and explains clearly how language and communication direct our thinking. Though the topic discussed here is epistemological, the author applies the genetic method and in easy language explains how knowledge is

formed. Though the account is rather elementary, its contribution to the philosophy of thinking is very good. This book will be a very valuable acquisition to students of philosophy.

A THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS : By Arnold Schultz. Pub. : Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 527. Price : \$ 12.50.

The book under review is an exhaustive study of consciousness both from the neurophysiological and psychological aspects. Though neurophysiology takes account of sensations as internally felt experiences, the author suggests rather humorously that physiological psychology has concentrated itself exclusively on overt forms of behaviour and that it has neglected Being implying that it has failed to study the totality of the homogeneous person. The book is divided into three parts. The first part discusses such topics as images and actions, bodily awareness, the theory of deposit and its criticism, universals and particulars and lastly the relation between logic and mathematics. In the second part is discussed the several modes of thought like passive and active referral, affection, ontic kinasthesis, abstractions and so on. The psychology of Ethics which is the last part of this learned work is distinctly more interesting and the author in this section attempts to lay bare the psychological principles determining our ethical behaviour. This work is a very learned and important contribution to the growing literature on consciousness. Its conclusions to a very great extent will clarify our knowledge of this fascinating topic.

Prof. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

AWARENESS AND PEAK-EXPERIENCE (In Hinduism, Buddhism & Existentialism) : By J. M. Hondius. Published by the author. Printed by Srigam Printers, 96 Mowbrays Road, Madras-18. Pp. 83. Price : Rs. 2.

"Words come out baffled, it defies all definition and description," says Dutch author J. M. Hondius in speaking of the 'transcendent reality' — and unfortunately the same can be said of his small booklet. For the most part, English not being the author's natural medium, one has to ponder both the grammatical construction of the majority of sentences and also the terminology, not to mention the content, in order to come to the sense the author intended. Although he has included a glossary of terms with the meanings they have for him, some of the definitions themselves need clearer definitions. For example : in explaining the title-phrase 'peak-experience' it is defined as a — "term of Abraham Maslow for highly estimated (sic) experi-

ence of the transcendent, which holds possibilities in a creative and revealing way, often felt as the grace of a brainwave," — whatever that may mean.

It is a pity that the phraseology, coupled with numerous printer's errors, makes reading so difficult, as Hondius laudably intends to draw parallels between the diverse, yet similar, mystical and transcendental experiences among what he calls the three 'religions' of Hinduism, Buddhism and Existentialism, and tries to point out the essential reality of the One Pure Consciousness (*chit*) underlying them all. However he seems to be unclear as to the precise meanings or functions of many of the words he uses, such as *awareness*, or *ego*; or *cosmic consciousness*, *God*, *Self*, *Atman*, *Brahman*, *Christ*, *Godhead*, *Holy Ghost* etc., many of which he uses interchangeably, or loosely, stating that: "by awareness, the active consciousness of the *jñani* is linked to the Self or Atman," (whereas the Self is Consciousness itself — and an enlightened being needs no 'linking').

There is little sequential flow within each chapter and the author digresses into personal anecdotes, or is diverted from the theme of the chapter — as in the section on Existentialism e.g., — where he deviates from the original theme and ends by speaking of the mysticism of the Roman Catholic Church, finalising the chapter with three pages of quotes from St. Paul's *Letters to the Corinthians*.

At least the text is liberally interspersed with valuable quotations from varied sources affording some lucid literary relief. With editing and clarification of terms it could turn out to be a worthwhile little book.

MUZ MURRAY.

SELECTIONS FROM AVESTA AND OLD PERSIAN: By Dr. Chinmay Dutt. Pub.: The World Press Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1973. Pp. xxxiii + 251. Price: Rs. 35.

Dr. Dutt's book provides in a convenient form some basic materials for those beginning to study Ancient Iranian languages. It contains texts in verse and prose selected from Avesta and Old Persian with brief grammatical notes and useful Indexes. Dr. Chinmay Dutt who is teaching in the University of Calcutta has prepared the book primarily for the use of students in India. It presupposes on the part of the students some background knowledge of Sanskrit to follow the valuable notes which contain comparisons quite frequently with Sanskrit with regard to the etymologies in the vocabulary. Besides the transcriptions of Avestan alphabets and Old Persian Cuneiform alphabets, the

author has given an excellent outline of Ancient Iranian literature and Old Persian.

Both teachers and students interested in Avesta and Old Persian will find Dr. Dutt's book useful.

Dr. R. BALASUBRAMANIAN.

THE ETERNAL CHRIST (A Vision and an Experience): By M. P. John. Pub.: New Times Press, 19, Rue de la Compagnie, Pondicherry. Price: Rs. 5.

As the title would indicate this is a progressive approach to the Message of Christ with a view to finding what is of eternal moment in his Teachings. The author is a lifelong and deep student and exponent of the Bible and in his personal life a seeker who has realised some of the experience which the human speech of the Gospels has been able to render only partially. That is why he has been able to go behind the apparent happenings recorded in these pages of the Gospels and find the secret workings of the Grace and Law of Truth veiled by them.

Mr. John is more than right when he says that 'the moral teachings of Jesus were incidental to the life of a Man filled with the Spirit of God' (P. 125). The son of God came to 'pour out my spirit' upon all. Every man was important to him for, 'The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are' — a declaration which the author has explained with remarkable clarity. He is one with the core of all spiritual experience when he says — and proves — that Resurrection signifies new life, that Heaven is within you and not somewhere beyond, that the Prodigal son and his elder brother are facts of everyone's life, that Judas lurks in every man. His conclusion that vertical relationship with God is incomplete without a horizontal realisation is unexceptionable.

This book opens the way for a broader appreciation of the life and message of Christ than has been possible so far, thanks to the rigid attitudes and dogmas of the established Church. It breathes a healthier spirit in conceding that the Infinite Reality cannot be limited to one finite embodiment for all time. We look forward for more series on this subject from the author.

YOGA TODAY: By Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra and J. Clement Vaz. Pub.: Macmillan Co., Madras. Pp. 236. Price: Rs. 47.

A stimulating collection of papers and discussions at a Yoga seminar held in 1971 under the auspices of the Friends of Yoga Society. The contents are divided into six sections, dealing with Yoga in General, Yoga and Education, Yoga in Medicine,

Yoga in Modern Society, Yoga and Spirituality and Yogic Research. The approach is generally pragmatic with a view to ascertaining what role Yoga can play in these several fields of life and to what extent it can be applied in educational courses.

Dr. Kurulkar strikes the right note when he says (p. 190) that only a Yogi can do research in the Yogic experiences of others. It is not legitimate to ask "the yogi to come forward for experimentation as though he were a guinea-pig at the hands of a so-called scientist who is ignorant of yoga from the yoga point of view."

Dr. Sahai is precise in his elucidation of *mudras*: "Mudra is an attitude of the body and the mind, principally the latter. . . . It is a posture of readiness, just as the one adopted by the runner of a race who is all set and poised for a start and

in waiting for the signal. But the more important . . . is mental expectation. The aspirant who has heard about spiritual experiences and is eager to have them, adopts the attitude of attention and expectation, which facilitates them." (P. 193).

Sri G. Raghaviah's description of his *Ray of Soul* treatment is interesting: "Just as light sends you rays, so does the soul. When I sit in yoga (savitkalpa samadhi), the rays of the soul will come out of my whole body as small projections through the skin and will be seen by others with the naked eye. In that state I touch the affected part of the body of the patient, passing in the rays of my soul for five or seven minutes. And pain, including high temperature can be reduced within fifteen minutes of this yoga treatment."

M. P. PANDIT.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

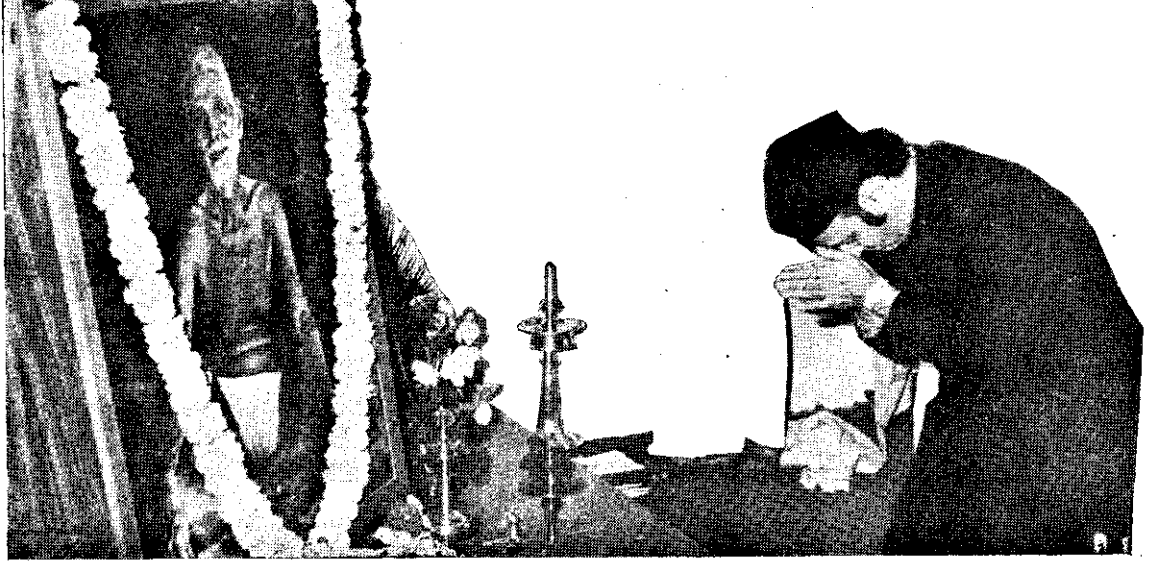
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Dr. Karan Singh Paying Homage to Sri Bhagavan at RAMANALAYA in New Delhi.

ASHRAM BULLETIN

95th JAYANTI CELEBRATION AT VARIOUS CENTRES

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Jayanti of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated from December 29 to January 26 at various functions held in the Kendra premises and elsewhere. On December 30, meetings were held at the Kendra both in the morning and evening for *puja* and Vedaparayana.

On the same day (Punarvasu) *pujas* were performed in the name of Sri Bhagavan at Uttara Swami Malai temple, where many devotees attended and sang in chorus *Akshara Mana Malai*.

Recitation competitions in Sanskrit and Tamil were held among school pupils, junior and senior, and prizes were distributed at the public meeting held on January 19. Dr. Karan Singh, Union Minister for Health, presided and spoke as follows :

“It has been the secret of India’s greatness and our continuous culture from the dawn of history that we have the capacity to look within and try to hear the voice of what is essentially soundless, and try to see the light where others see darkness. India is a land of Saints, Sages and Mystics, and

it is for them that our highest reverence has been reserved. It is also most remarkable that in every age, in every century, India has produced great men and women who have re-kindled the flame of spiritual power, who have re-generated the inner soul of our people. In our own century, we have seen some of the most remarkable saints in Indian history, like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi, who are really the salt of the earth.

“It is most encouraging and desirable that this Ramana Kendra has been set up in Delhi, because Sri Ramana Maharshi was a unique personality, one of the rare ones who have descended in the course of the last many centuries. The inner quest,

the eternal quest, 'Who am I' (*Koham*), has added validity today with the increase in the power of science and technology. In the Upanishad there is a clear distinction between knowledge and wisdom, *jnana* and *vijnana*. Knowledge we have in full measure. Our scientists have probed the outer vastness of the universe and the heart of the atom; they have done wonders. But along with outer progress and material growth, we should try to illuminate the inner region of our consciousness, for the survival and progress of the human race. And this can be done through the blessings of sages like Sri Ramana Maharshi, who have realised in their own lives the highest reaches of spiritual attainment and who have become sources of power and inspiration for people like us who are lower down on the ladder of spiritual evolution.

"In this attractive Kendra building, you have tried to create a mountain cave, a cave in Arunachala, which is really symbolic of the heart that is within each one of us. It is that inner cave which we have to enter, for if we enter it we shall hear a sound where there was no sound before and we shall see a light where previously there was darkness."

* * * *

The Kendra celebrated Gita Day on December 25 when Sri Bhagavan's *Gita Sara*, in Sanskrit and Tamil, was recited.

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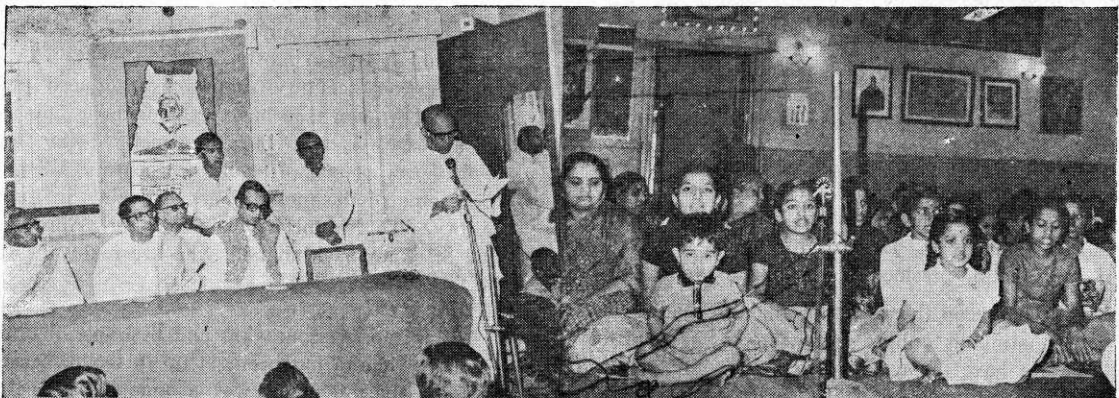
On January 26, about 1,000 people participated in the Narayana *pūja* organized by the Seva Samiti. Prizes were distributed to the children of the Madras Camp by Kumari Pattammal, Principal of the Tamil School, Lakshmi Bai Nagar.

On March 11, Sivaratri was observed with due solemnity. On Friday, March 14, *Griha Pravesam* of the SEVALAYA Building (ground floor) was performed with religious rites.

At CALCUTTA

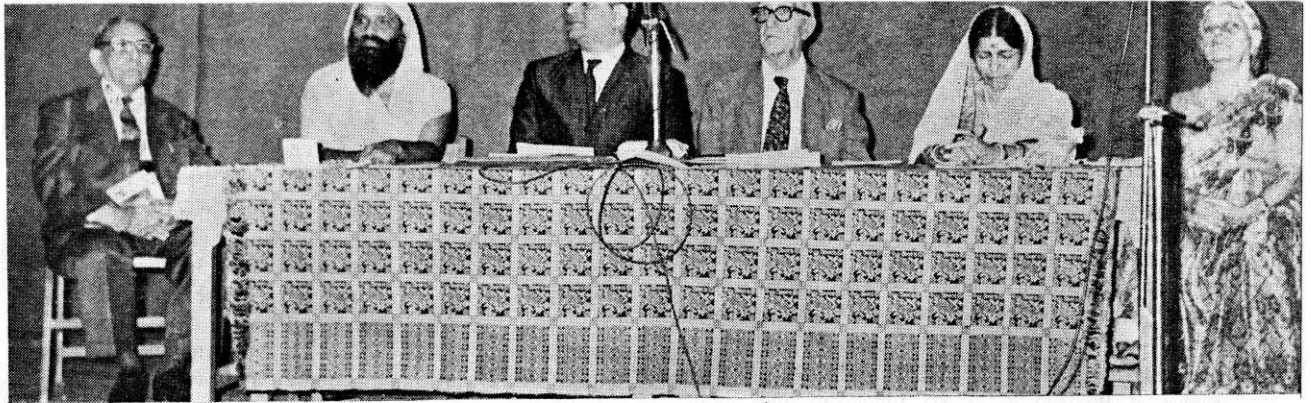
The Ramana Kendra, Calcutta, celebrated the Jayanti in a big way on February 9. The prominent invitees were Shri Sankar Ghosh, Minister for Finance, West Bengal Government, Shri Amiya Kumar Mazumdar, Member, Public Service Commission (West Bengal) and Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, former Minister. A group of children from the Bala Vihar of Chinmaya Mission, Calcutta, gave an impressive recital of Sri Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*. This was followed by speeches by the distinguished visitors.

Shri Sankar Ghosh pointed out that the Vedic teachings and Indian philosophic and cultural tradition in general aimed at creation of better social sense in the people. The Kendra had therefore the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of society. Sri Amiya Kumar Mazumdar dealt with aspects of Indian philosophy and Sri Bhagavan's teachings. Dr. Sanyal recalled the Lord's promise in the Gita that He will incarnate to quell evil and establish dharma and said that Sri Bhagavan came on such a mission. This had significance for India and the world. Sri P. Subramanian, President and Sri P. P. Modak, Secretary, also spoke on the occasion. With the screening of the film on Sri Bhagavan which was supported by a commentary by Sri N. S. Ramanan, followed by group singing of Sri Bhagavan's *Aksharamanamalai* and Sankara's *Dakshinamurty Ashtakam*, the function came to a close.



Sri P. Subramaniam, President, CALCUTTA KENDRA, welcoming the guests and the gathering

Chinmaya Mission Bala Vihar children chanting *Upadesa Saram*, as prayer.



SRI RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS AT BOMBAY

Seated (left to right): Sri Popatlal B. Kotak (*Vice-Chairman*), Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, Sri Justice G. N. Vaidya, Sri Nariman D. Sahukar (*Chairman*), Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje, Smt. Mani Sahukar.

At BOMBAY

The *Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee* (Bombay), which has been celebrating the *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan in Bombay for the past several years, arranged a colourful function on Sunday, March 2, to celebrate the 95th birthday of Sri Bhagavan, at S. I. Bhajan Samaj Hall, Matunga, Bombay.

Sri G. N. Vaidya, Judge of Bombay High Court, presided over the function. Rajkumari Prabhavati Devi, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan and who has been at the Ashram in the days of Bhagavan, gave an inspiring speech on Him. This speech was so much liked by the devotees that she was requested to give another talk on March 11 — Maha Sivarathri day. Sri Swami Dayananda of the Chinmaya Mission also graced the occasion and gave an interesting speech. Dr. Framrose A. Bode who has also seen the Maharshi spoke on Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Nariman D. Sahukar, Chairman of the Committee, his wife, Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Sri Popatlal B. Kotak (*Vice Chairman*) deserve all credit for the success of this function.

At MADRAS

Sri Ramana Satchidananda Samaj, Kodambakkam, arranged an elaborate programme of speeches including *Kalakshepam* between 29th December and 6th January. The distinguished participants were Justice K. S. Venkataraman, Sri K. V. Jagannathan, the eminent Tamil scholar, Sri Ranganatha Swami of Ramakrishna Math, Madras, Sri Balakrishna Joshi, the well-known educationist, Justice Mohammed Ismail and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

At MADURAI

Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi was celebrated with great eclat at *Sri Ramana Mandiram*, Madurai for five days, from 27th to 31st December, 1974.

The celebrations were inaugurated by *Sri-La-Sri* Somasundara Paramachariya Swamigal of Tirugnana-sambandha Mutt, popularly known as *Madurai Adhnam*, on Friday the 27th December. Dr. G. Subra-

maniam delivered a lecture on *Sri Ramana Prabhavam* and Smt. Sivananda Vijayalakshmi gave a musical discourse on 'Sri Meenakshi Kalyanam.'

On the second day under the presidency of Sri Sankarasubbian, Commissioner and Special Officer of Madurai Corporation, Dr. N. Kuppuswami Sarma, gave a discourse on Bhagavan Ramana. There was a musical performance by Thalainayar Sri S. Nagaraja Bhagavathar and party.

On the third day Sri A. R. Raghavan and Dr. M. R. Subramaniam talked on the greatness of Bhagavan Ramana, Sri N. M. R. Subbaraman presiding. There was also music by Mrs. Ponnammal and party.

On Jayanti Day (30-12-74) morning, there was Vedaparayanam and special puja to Bhagavan. Maheswara Puja (feeding the poor) was conducted on a large scale. In the evening Sri Bhagavan's portrait was taken around through all the four streets accompanied by Nathaswaram by Miss M. P. Saraswathy and party and led by the elephant of Sri Meenakshi Sundareswara Temple. At night, Sri V. Santhanam of *Dinamani* presided and Sri S. S. M. Sundaram, gave a talk on Sri Bhagavan. Sri Srinivasa Iyengar and party rendered a Jalatarangam concert. On the last day there was *bhajan* by Sri Meenambika Ram Bhajan Mandali at Sri Ramana Mandiram. All the celebrations were a great success by His Grace.

At NELLORE

The two-day celebration (between 20—30 December) organised by the Maharshi Ramana Yogi Rama Vijnana Sangham comprised of traditional puja to Sri Bhagavan and lectures on his philosophy. The speakers were: Acharya I. Kameswara Rao, Swami Brahmanandji, Sri M. S. R. Sastry, Sri D. Krishna Reddy, Acharya P. Hanumanth Janakirama Sarma, Sri P. Pulliah and Acharya M. Ramiah. A lecture contest for students on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings was arranged and prizes distributed. Likewise

a Yogasana contest was also held. At the end Sri Bhagavan's picture was taken out in procession.

At SECUNDERABAD

The Jayanti was celebrated in the Gujarati Hall at Secunderabad on Sunday the 12th January 1975 under the auspices of Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali.

The programme started with parayanam, followed by Sankirtan. Sri C. C. Mody spoke on the experience of Realization of Sri Bhagavan and quoted profusely from *Yoga Vasishtha*. Sri M. S. Kotiswaran, Director, Tagore Home created the Ashram atmosphere by reciting Tamil songs of Sri Bhagavan. He explained them in English also. Pujya Goswami Sri Vrajivanlal, head of Radhavallabh Sampradaya gave a short speech in which he said that Maharshi was not a *Tatwajñani* but *Tatwa* Itself.

At the end H.H. Sri Ranganathananda, President of Ramakrishna Math, Secunderabad, gave his impressions of his first meeting with Sri Bhagavan. He said that Sri Bhagavan though eternally immersed in Brahman, was conscious also of outer activities. The Swami also mentioned that he had the good fortune of being in Sri Ramanasram on 30th December 1974 at the time of Jayanti Celebration.

With the distribution of prasad the meeting came to a close.

PILGRIMS

"There have been saints who have promised to return to earth for the renewed guidance of their devotees in life, but Sri Bhagavan was the complete *Jñani* in whom there is not even that vestige of an ego that may indicate rebirth, and the devotees understood this. His promise was different. 'I am not going away. Where could I go? I am *here*.' Not even 'I shall be here', but '*I am here*', for to the *Jñani* there is no change, no time, no difference of past and future, no going away, only the eternal Now in which the whole of time is posed, the universal, spaceless *HERE*. What he affirmed was his continued, uninterrupted Presence, his continued guidance. Long ago he had told Sivaprakasam Pillai: 'He who has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken.' After the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan, the devotees quickly discovered how, more than ever, he has now become the Inner Guru. The *Vichara*, leading to the Inner Guru, has grown easier and more accessible now and meditation brings a more immediate flow of Grace," wrote Arthur Osborne in his book, *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*.

Our readers who have been following the columns of *Ashram Bulletin*, particularly *Pilgrims*, in each

issue, would have found, after reading the experiences of many devotees who have been at the Ashram, corroboration of the above statement.

In this issue we are happy to report of having received reputed old devotees, like Sri Suddhananda Bharati (*introduced* to our readers in the July, 1972 issue), the distinguished members of the Greek Royal Family, including King Constantine and Queen Anne-Marie of Greece and our regular pilgrim-devotees, like Mme. Jeanne Guerineau.

Instead of publishing lengthy accounts on them we propose in this issue to publish only such distinguished pilgrims' photos hereunder. Among a large number of visitors whose photos are not available, we give the names of a few:

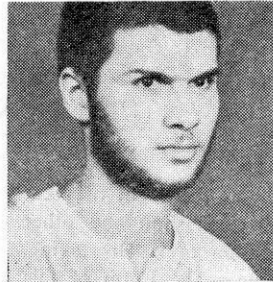
Mr. & Mrs. Indra Mohan Chopra, New Delhi
Sri Narayandas Tulsidas Khimji, Bombay
Miss Dolly Kolah, Bombay
Miss Geeta Sharma, Madras
Br. Tiagarajan of Chinmaya Mission, Bombay
Br. Sivasubramaniam " " "
Br. Sadasivam " " "
Br. Ranganathan " " "
Glen of Hawaii " " "
Swami Suddhananda " " "
Smt. Sumen Bhagat " " "
Amma " " "
Br. Raja (with his mother, Mrs. Ramanathan) " " "
Aranda Bharati, Calcutta
Sri R. V. Setlur, Bombay
Dr. & Mrs. L. K. Nadgir, Mysore
Sri Motilal Pandit, Bombay
Sri S. V. S. R. Anjaneyulu (and family), Vizag
Smt. Saroja Krishnan, Salem
Smt. & Sri K. Ramaswamy (with his mother), Bangalore
Smt. & Sri V. C. Naidu, Madras
Smt. & Sri Jayant Gadgil, Bombay
Sri V. Dwaraknath Reddy, Chittoor
Mrs. & Brigadier S. R. Natiyel, Kalyan
Rev. Mathaji Sivananda Sachidananda Saraswathi, Ceylon
Dr. & Mrs. Doraisamy, Ceylon
Mr. & Mrs. Ratna Navaratnam, Ceylon
Miss Sarah Sunja, U.S.A. (niece of Mr. Vaclav Cech of Czechoslovakia)
Mr. Paul Rheibay, West Germany
Mrs. Christa Scholz, West Germany
Mr. Volker Gausman, West Germany
Miss Wilhelmine Yosner Klassen, West Germany
Miss Kamala, West Germany
Mr. David Powell, Canada
Mr. William James Champion, England
Sri Ripudaman Singh-Yadav, England



*Miss Yvonne Dauguet,
France*



*Mr. Johannes J. de Reede,
Italy*



*Sri Gangaji,
Italy*



*Mme. Jeanne Guerineau,
France*



*Miss Diane Sundin,
France*



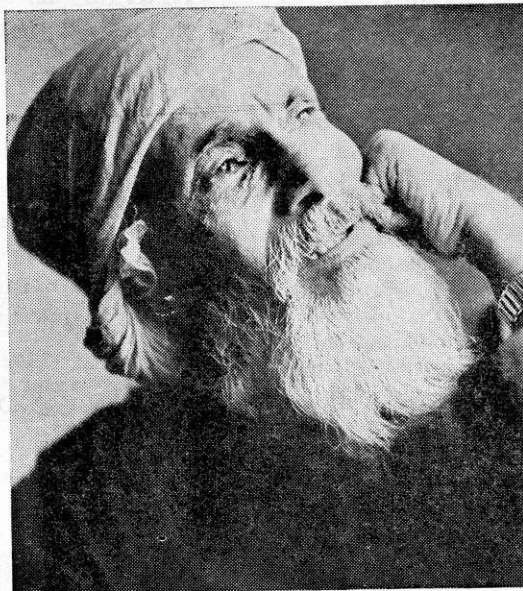
Dr. & Mrs. Pierre Fredou, France



Mrs. Sabharwal



*Mr. Johannes Meihuizen,
England*



Sri Yogi Suddhananda Bharati



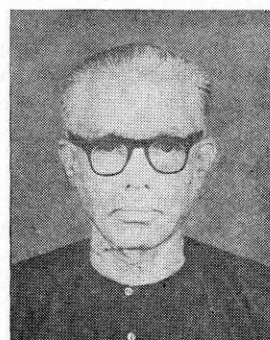
*Mrs. Trudel Elsaesser,
West Germany*



Mrs. Marline Boers, Holland



Smt. & Sri Satyanarayana Tandon, Kanpur



*Mr. Erich Wilzbach,
West Germany*

SIVARATRI

Sivaratri has been described as the night of great silence and solemnity, on which Vishnu and other gods worshipped Arunachala soon after His taking, out of solicitude for His devotees, the Form of this Hill. And it has been mentioned in one of the past issues how Sri Bhagavan sat one whole night (of *Sivaratri*) with his devotees, in profound Silence.

On March 11 this year, as usual, there was the ceremonial worship at Sri Bhagavan's shrine of Grace and that of the Mother at the four quarters of the night. And devotees and inmates of the Ashram went round the Hill in groups singing Bhagavan's *Hymns to Arunachala*, and observing silence otherwise. The aim of *sadhana* is to prevent the mind getting externalised or falling into torpor and this is served by the vigil observed on *Sivaratri* night. *Sivaratri* reminds us of the inner poise we have to maintain throughout our life.

THE GREEK ROYAL FAMILY

In our issue of April, 1974, we were very happy to report of the growing interest of the Greek Royal Family in Sri Bhagavan and in His Ashram. We are always happy to receive every member of this extraordinarily devoted family, at our Ashram. Accompanied by *Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan*, the *Queen Mother Frederika*, *King Constantine*, *Queen Anne-Marie* and *Princess Irene* (of Greece) visited the Ashram on January 28. While the King and Queen had to leave the next day itself, Dr. Mahadevan and the Queen Mother stayed to attend the anniversary day of Swami Rajeswarananda, whose Samadhi is newly built within the Ashram premises, at the foot of Arunachala. The Queen Mother spent a quiet day in contemplation at Skandashram, high up on the Hill Arunachala, well-known as the place of Bhagavan's residence from 1916 to 1922.

Again, with an earnest desire to visit Tiruchuzhi, the birthplace of Bhagavan, the Queen Mother Frederika, Princess Irene and *Princess Sofia* of Spain, arrived at the Ashram on February 27, accompanied by Dr. Mahadevan. The next day they went to Madurai, wherein is situated *Ramana Mandiram* (at No. 11, Chockappa Naicken Street), where Sri Bhagavan had His first Experience of the Self. They then went to Tiruchuzhi, the birthplace of Bhagavan, situated south of Madurai, and paid their respects to Bhagavan at His parental home.

SRI VIDYA HOMA

The annual function in commemoration of the commencement of worship of *Sri Chakra Meru*, consecrated by the TOUCH of Sri Bhagavan was performed at the Ashram on Friday, March 21. A group of

priests, including those of the Ashram, conducted the same on a grand scale with attention to details. Commencing at 7 a.m., the preliminaries (*puja*) went on till 11 a.m. From 11 a.m. to 3-30 p.m. was the main portion of the *Havan* (oblation into the fire). *Purnahuti*, the final oblation, came off at 4-30 p.m. followed by *puja* again; and distribution of *prasad* to those present. As usual there was *bhiksha* at 11-30 a.m.

ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA, CANADA

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan who are running Sri Ramana Maharshi Center at Arunachala Ashrama, R. R. 1, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada, have enthusiastically planned and started construction of a TEMPLE for Sri Bhagavan, in their grounds, which they expect to inaugurate on September 1, 1975., the sacred day of Sri Bhagavan's first arrival at Arunachala.

This temple will have a large colour photo of Sri Bhagavan and a representation of Sri Lalita Maha Tripura Sundari Devi in the form of a *Sri Chakra*.

May Sri Bhagavan's Gracious Blessings constantly guide and bless them all.

OBITUARY

Smt. KAMAKSHI

Smt. Kamakshi, who was introduced to our readers in the October, 1974 issue, passed away peacefully



Smt. Kamakshi

on the evening of January 3. She bore her ailment (cancer) with great fortitude. The name of Bhagavan was ever on her lips and it was her constant remembrance of Bhagavan that enabled her to maintain her inner peace. She was fortunate to remain near Bhagavan's Ashram (in her house) during her

last days and fortunate to have had a co-devotee of

Bhagavan (Dr. O. Ramachandriah) as her husband, who served her with admirable diligence. Her funeral next morning was attended by the President of the Ashram together with its inmates and devotees. She will ever be remembered by all who knew her as one of the remarkable devotees of Bhagavan Ramana!

* * * *

Smt. THANGAMMAL

Smt. Thangammal was the second daughter of Dr. Narayana Iyer, Chief Medical Officer, Pudukkotta State and private practitioner at Salem, later. He has helped building Sri Ramanasramam, at the present site, in its first year, 1923. Thangammal came and settled down near the Ashram later with her husband, Sri T. S. Rajagopalan and children. She was deeply devoted to Bhagavan and she worshipped Him through her melodious music with *Vina* accompaniment. Her youngest son, Ramana, as a child, was saved from the poison of snake-bite by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan.



Smt. Thangammal

We come to know that she passed away last year with her thought intent on Bhagavan. Co-devotees know how she had passed through the ups and downs of life by dint of her great faith in Bhagavan Ramana. May her soul rest in peace at His Feet!

* * * *

JAYADEVLAL DAVEY



Jayadevlal Davey

We are sad to report to our readers of the passing away of *Jayadevlal Davey* (introduced in our issue of January, 1970) suddenly on December 30, 1974. It was Sri Davey who first took a cine film of Bhagavan, as far back as 1937. He was deeply devoted to Bhagavan and has taken a number of photos of Bhagavan. We are informed that on his last day, before leaving the

house he uttered Sri Bhagavan's name thrice aloud. It is but natural that the thought of Bhagavan came to him then to take him to Bhagavan's Feet. Our sympathy to his bereaved wife. He will be remembered as one of the most sincere devotees of Bhagavan.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

The Transmission of the Mind : Outside the Teaching : By Lu Kuan Yu. Pub. : Rider & Company, 3, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, England. (£ 3.50).

Hinduism : By R. C. Zaehner. Pub. : Oxford University Press, London, England. (Rs. 10).

The Spiritual Journey of Joel S. Goldsmith : By Lorraine Sinkler. Pub. : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, England. (£ 2.95).

Path to Perfection : Compiled from the Writings of the Mother : By Keshavmurti. Pub. : Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. (Rs. 12).

The Revelation of Humanity : By Jonas Sepety. Pub. : Philosophical Library Inc., 15, East 40th Street, New York, U.S.A. (\$ 7.50).

Epicetetus : A Dialogue in Common Sense : By John Bonforte. Pub. : Philosophical Library Inc., 15, East 40th Street, New York, U.S.A. (\$ 6).

Ten Principal Upanishads : By Dr. N. A. Nikam. Pub. : Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 172, Naimgaum Cross Road, Bombay-4000174. (Rs. 30).

The Science of the 1st Person : By D. E. Harding. Pub. : Sholland Publications, Nacton, Ipswich, England. (£ 0.75).

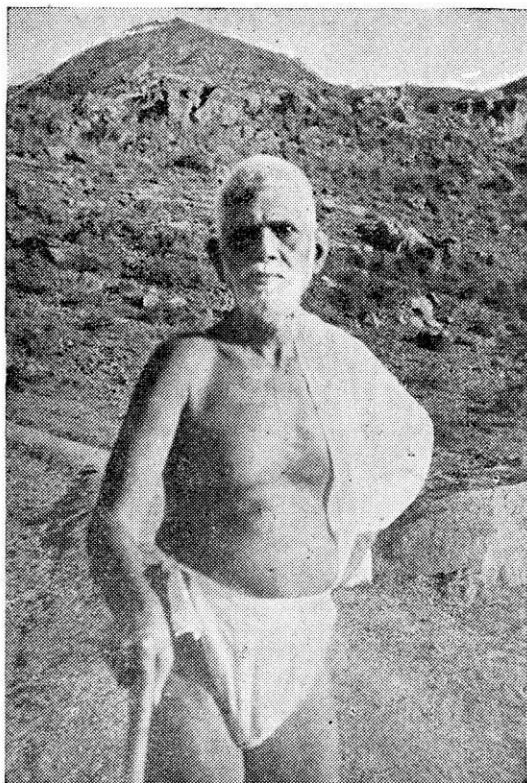


"By the inquiry *Who Am I?* the mind will become quiescent. The thought *Who Am I?* will destroy all other thoughts, and, like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then there will arise Self-realization."

— SRI BHAGAVAN
in *Who Am I?*

INTRODUCING....

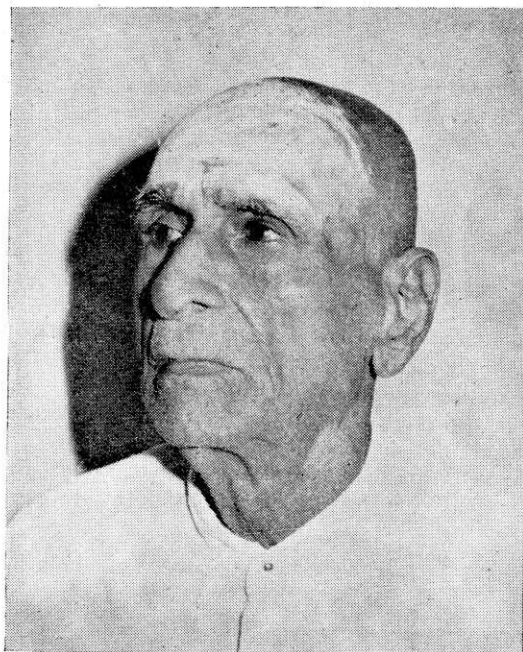
Sri N. R. Narayana Aiyar



Sri N. R. Narayana Aiyar, one of the oldest living devotees of Sri Bhagavan, was born in June 1887, and after a long service in the Government Telegraph department as officer, retired in 1939. A study of *Self Realisation: Life and Teachings of Sri Maharshi*, aroused his interest in Bhagavan Ramana and he visited him first in 1936. He was immediately caught in His Divine net!

One evening, during this first visit, when Sri Bhagavan looked at him with Grace, he was thrilled to the core. This he considered as Bhagavan's touch of grace, *Sakthi Pāta*. Thereafter he began to visit Bhagavan frequently, and in 1943 settled down with his family in Tiruvannamalai, to be near him and practise *Atma Vichara*. It is interesting how he was initiated into *Who Am I?* enquiry by Bhagavan Himself. He writes: "The third day after my

settling down at Tiruvannamalai soon after I prostrated before Him and sat down, He indicated me to close my eyes by closing His eyes and, when I closed my eyes, within five minutes I was unaware of what was happening for nearly half an hour, after which I was released from His influence. This continued for nearly a month. Within a fortnight, I found myself spontaneously engaged in the enquiry *Who Am I?*"



Sri N. R. Narayana Aiyar

He continued to live near the Ashram, at *Palakottu*, even after Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana* in 1950, and then for some years inside the Ashram; and only due to weakness of old age made him go and live with his son, Sri N. Sambasivam, a Water Diviner, in Madras.

Sri Narayana Aiyar got interested in the maintenance and growth of the Ashram from the very day he came into contact with Sri Bhagavan. He has been contributing his mite regularly for its upkeep. He wished the Ashram to be the *Spiritual Home* of

devotees, from where they could have access to the teachings of Bhagavan and spread it all over the world. He also wrote a book : *Technique of Maha Yoga*, giving practical hints on the path of Self-enquiry.

To prove the continued presence and guidance of Sri Bhagavan even after the disappearance of His bodily presence, Sri Narayana Aiyar, quotes the following : "An English lady asked the Ashram by letter for spiritual instruction in 1956, that is, six years after Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana*. She was

asked to repeat the *japa* : OM NAMO BHAGAVATHE SRI RAMANAYA and she replied that she was regularly repeating it. A couple of years later, she wrote to say that some voice within her was questioning her 'Who is praying?' 'Who is asking?' and so on, all revolving on 'Who Am I?' She was thus directed to the path of Self-enquiry. From this, it would be clear that earnest aspirants get His guidance always irrespective of time and place."

We wish this great devotee many more years of a life of devotion to His Master!

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, cordially invites the readers of *The Mountain Path*, and others too, to participate in the 25th *BRAHMA NIRVANA* Celebrations of *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi* on the 8th May, 1975, and to partake of the munificent Grace of Sri Bhagavan.

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Edited by ARTHUR OSBORNE

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Letters to the Editor

Reply by Lucia Osborne

PAUL BRUNTON'S CRITICISM

. . . I read the reply given by you in the latest issue regarding Dr. Brunton's remarks. In fact I very recently read his book referred by Mr. Cross. Dr. Brunton does remark as you know, that he had ideological differences with the Maharshi. I got the impression from his book *The Inner Reality* that he looks upon Jesus as one who is not only realised but also went to the people in the street and tried to uplift them whereas the Maharshi while realised undoubtedly did not go to the people himself. For my part I am a bit confused. Is there not an element of truth in Dr. Brunton's view? I have been reading recently Sri Ramakrishna's life. I notice there too that Sri Ramakrishna went to different houses of devotees often and talked about things which lifted the hearts of men. It is true that his visits were only to Calcutta but he did go to his disciples.

I heard someone say the following: while the Maharshi agreed to an operation for cancer, Ramakrishna did not. In fact when Ramakrishna was told by devotees that cancer in the throat makes eating practically impossible, he replied: 'Is there only one mouth which eats; there are thousands of mouths eating, so where does the question of an operation come in?' The conclusion made by the friend is that Ramakrishna is much more identified with others than the Maharshi. Could you give me a clarification, please? I would be grateful to receive copy of Dr. Brunton's article in the January 1971 issue of *The Mountain Path*.

A reader from Bangalore.

Dr. Brunton's 'ideological differences with Maharshi' as he puts it, mean simply that he failed to understand his teaching of pure advaita. For a realised man there is no need to 'go to the people'. He may or may not do so according to circumstances. His very presence uplifts humanity and is a blessing to the generation. Like sunshine his Grace embraces all but not all hearts are open enough to receive it, not all flowers blossom.

Ramana Maharshi agreed to have an operation because His devotees kept on pleading for it. He agreed only for their sake to allay their anxiety, in response to their devotion, out of compassion, though He knew and gave indications that the time had come for Him to leave the body. 'Why not let things take their own course?' He said but the devotees kept on pleading. 'You attach too much importance

to the body' He used to say. The living inner guru takes a form to lead the devotee back to Himself in the heart and then leaves this earthly scene.

A realised man is identified with the whole of creation. For him there are no others. If his attention is drawn in a certain direction divine activity starts spontaneously.

About eating Ramana Maharshi said the same thing as Ramakrishna that He was eating with many mouths, not only with His own.

* * * *

MARKS OF A DEVOTEE

. . . I would like to clarify with you some questions since I am on the way of becoming a follower of Sri Bhagavan and therefore I would like to know what path to take in order to be considered as a devotee of Sri Bhagavan. My questions are the following:

1. Do I have to be a vegetarian avoiding completely animal food?
2. Are alcoholic beverages including wine forbidden?
3. Do I have to be celibate?
4. Do I have to lead a strongly disciplined daily life and avoid amusements such as dancing, playing cards, like bridge etc.?

LESLIE DOMINITIS,
Alabama.

If you feel drawn to Sri Bhagavan you are already a devotee. His teaching as recorded in the books, available at Sri Ramanasramam or at John Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, are living words adapted to the aptitude of seekers on all levels. A serious seeker will find in them the path best suited to his temperament.

It is advisable for a spiritual seeker to be a vegetarian. Sri Bhagavan specifically recommended sattvic food.

Some devotees avoid all stimulating drinks, even tea and coffee, though it is not specifically forbidden.

A married man leads the life of a householder whose dharma is also to create a family. Sexual indulgence per se would be an impediment.

The simpler the life one leads the better it is in the long run. In the measure as meditation becomes spontaneous and joyful, amusements loose their attraction.